

Taking a different tack, Sledd (1969, 1972) has questioned the inevitability of language prejudice and the necessity of formulating educational goals so as to accommodate it. Rather than fomenting bidialectalism, Sledd believes we should attack the negative language attitudes of powerful individuals in the mainstream of society. Some black scholars see racial prejudice on the part of the white society as the real problem and the focusing on the language question as something of an attempt to dodge the real issue (Wolfram and Fasold 1974:181–182). Obviously, either to eradicate black dialect or to promote bidialectalism, or simply to teach standard English all involve serious problems, and no matter what tack is taken, substantial numbers of Blacks will be antagonized. What is certain, however, is that the ultimate decision will have to be made by the black community itself.

Meanwhile an important decision has been rendered by the United States District Court for Eastern Michigan, a decision which has widespread implications for all linguistic minorities. The court ruled that not only was Black English a rule-governed and systematic variety of English but also that treatment of the children's language variety as an inferior system by insensitive teachers can be educationally damaging. The decision ordered the Ann Arbor School District to help its teachers to recognize the children's home language and to use that knowledge in teaching the reading of standard English. The school district is now implementing a plan to carry out the court's order (Center for Applied Linguistics 1980; Wolfram 1979).

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the relationship between ethnicity and language. To what extent does one determine or shape the other?
2. How does ethnic and linguistic diversity in Yugoslavia differ from that in the United States?
3. Discuss the types and functions of the different forms of black verbal arts.
4. What are some of the ways in which the Black English Vernacular differs from other varieties of English? What is the social significance of the differences?
5. What are some of the criticisms directed against the concept of Black English?
6. How does the sociolinguistic situation of United States Hispanics differ from that of United States Blacks?
7. What varieties of speech are found in the Chicano and other Hispanic communities in the United States?
8. Discuss the failure of the public school system in dealing with the linguistic differences in the student population.
9. How does the school district with which you are best acquainted deal with linguistic differences?

Nationalism, colonialism and culture contact

The modern world capitalist system first emerged in the early sixteenth century in western Europe with the production of agricultural commodities for sale on a world market (Wallerstein 1974, 1979). A number of factors accounted for the emergence of the world system at that time, one of the most important of which was the colonization of the Americas, later of parts of Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The colonized areas became the periphery of the system, as they supplied raw materials to the core countries (the colonizers) and the latter provided them with manufactured goods in return. It was the first phase of the world system, agricultural capitalism, which paved the way for industrial capitalism. The industrial revolution was largely financed by the gold, silver, and other commodities plundered from Mexico, Peru, and other peripheral areas.

It is noteworthy that the rise of capitalism gave rise to the modern phenomena of nationalism, strong centralized political states, colonialism, racism, and standard languages. The importance of the latter was emphasized in a classic statement of Lenin:

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose populations speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in its various classes and lastly for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer. Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of *national states*, under which the requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. (Lenin 1947:8–9).

Of course, the final victory of capitalism over feudalism took place at different times in different places, thereby accounting for the emergence of national languages in each case.

While linguistic unity strengthened the core countries of the system, use of their languages in peripheral areas retarded the linguistic as well as the economic development of the exploited colonies. Continuing use of English, French, etc. as "languages of wider communication" in the Third World is related to the continuing domination of the world economy by the United States and the European Common Market countries (along with Japan, which has had little linguistic impact on the rest of the world.).

10.1 Nationalism

A nationality may have all or some of the following characteristics: common descent, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, religion, or language. Some nationalities, like the Swiss, however, have no language of their own; others, like the Norwegians, had no true language of their own until after they had achieved nationality. Ideas of nationality and ethnocentrism have been related to language differences ever since ancient times. The Greek word for barbarian, *barbaros*, was originally akin to the Sanskrit *barbara*, which meant "stammering" or "non-Aryan," whereas the Slavs called the Germans *nemtsi* or "mutes" since they could not make themselves understood.

In the Middle Ages, no one thought to compel others in linguistic matters. The people of that time did not think in terms of nationality. They did not impose languages but, instead, religious creeds (Kolarz 1946:10). With the Renaissance and Reformation and the introduction of printing and the spread of education to the middle and lower classes, the general population began to participate in national politics. As a consequence, there was a development of language loyalty and its expression in the politics of nationalism. Some Romantic thinkers thus came to believe that language is the most important identifying characteristic of peoples and, therefore, should serve as the criterion of political boundaries, ignoring the vast complexities in the relationship between language and political community.

Before the rise of nationalism, language was rarely stressed as a factor on which the power and prestige of a group depended. Modern nationalism's concern with languages as an index of authenticity was first stressed by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who developed the view that the mother tongue expressed a nationality's soul or spirit. He viewed language as the best way to safeguard or recover a national heritage. He believed also in the desirability of diversity in language and in culture. In Herder's words:

"Has a nationality anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought domain, its tradition, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good. . . With language is created the heart of a people" (quoted by Fishman 1972a:1). Another German thinker, Johann Fichte, 1762–1814,

expressed a prevalent attitude when he said, "Wherever a separate language is found, there is also a separate nation which has the right to manage its affairs . . . and to rule itself" (quoted by Inglehart and Woodward 1972:358).

This particular attitude is not a universally accepted one, although the relationship between language and nationalism has been at the heart of a number of sociolinguistic and ideological issues. The identification of language with nationality undoubtedly contributed to the growth of fullfledged written languages in Europe (Deutsch 1968:599–600), as witnessed by the following figures:

Year	Number of Written Languages
950	6
1250	17
1809	16
1900	30
1937	53

On the other hand, nationalism and ethnicity do not always go hand in hand. For example, the ethnically and linguistically German people of French Alsace-Lorraine were opposed to annexation by Germany in 1871, for they wished to remain politically French. Even today they consider themselves German-speaking Frenchmen, rather than Germans living under French rule (Kohn 1965:61). An obvious counter example is the Arab nationality, based primarily on language, rather than race, culture, or territory.

Even more striking were the various nineteenth century "pan" movements which were based on the premise that linguistic similarity could serve as the basis for far-flung territorial states encompassing, for example, all the speakers of German, Turkish, or Slavic languages, as in the so-called pan-German, pan-Turkish, or pan-Slavic movements. Yet, it is not necessarily the case that linguistic and ethnic affinity results in cultural and ideological affinity and thus in the desire for union. There was, in effect, no cultural affinity among the various Slavic speaking peoples. Polish civilization had less in common with Russian civilization than with that of Catholic Europe. Contrary to pan-Slav theory, Slavic peoples frequently felt more bitter hostility against each other than against non-Slavic peoples, such as Poles against Russians, Ukrainians against Poles, or Serbs against Bulgars. In effect, these movements proclaimed the affinity of various peoples, in spite of differences of political citizenship and historical background, of civilization and religion, solely on the strength of an affinity of language.

Cultural and linguistic differences do not always lead to demands for recognition and political autonomy, as in Cyprus or Belgium. Differences may not be noted, or if noted not ideologized—that is, not made the source of divisiveness, as in Switzerland. In recent decades, suitability for science and technology is demanded of new languages; suitability for governmental and literary use, as before World War I, is no longer sufficient. Hence, the linguistic component of nationalism is weaker than it once was. Technology necessarily has a uniformizing tendency, and, hence, is inherently nonethnic. Only two or three science/technology languages are needed at the international level, so that

diglossia at the national level becomes imperative. Thus, a national language may be used for ordinary, literary, and governmental affairs but an international language like English or French for science, technology, and diplomacy (Fishman 1968a:44-47).

Nationalism seems to occur in two principal forms, sometimes called "ethnic" and "political" nationalism. In the first type, a local ethnic group in a multinational state is asserting its identity and demanding self-determination, including in some cases its own nation-state. In the second type, an ethnically and linguistically diverse overseas colony (usually of a European power) is demanding cultural and political independence. In this type, there is likely to be a broader concept of ethnicity or nation, encompassing, as it might, ethnically diverse groups. This is the case, for example, in almost all of the former African colonies. In almost all cases of nationalism (not true, for example, of the nationalism of the American colonies in 1776), there is a marked language difference between the submerged nation and its master(s). In the case of ethnic nationalism, there is usually only one language, which is the language of the oppressed. In multilingual nations like Nigeria or Kenya, on the other hand, the voice of the submerged nation had to express itself in English, even to its own supporters, or to use a native trade lingua franca like Swahili. Nationalism and socialism in Angola and Mozambique are expressed in Portuguese.

The concept of nation as a people, as above, must not be confused with the concept of the nation-state, which is a political entity having sovereignty and a separate physical existence. In other words, we must distinguish political community and sociological community, each of which may have language needs unrecognized by the other. Present-day nationalism involves both modernization and authentication, and these two goals can easily be in conflict. For the nation, the major problems center around language maintenance and enrichment, but for the nation-state, they center around political, social, and economic integration in the context of national and international problems (Fishman 1968a:39-43).

Ethnic nationalism has flourished in eastern Europe, where it has been difficult for territoriality to be the basis of nationhood. There is a lack of segregation of nationalities, as there are very few clear-cut geographic boundaries between the ethnic groups. Throughout eastern Europe, during the past few centuries, the most powerful groups subjugated the less powerful ones, and the upper classes of the oppressed often adopted the language and culture of their conquerors. Thus, they changed their nationality, so that the masses of the people were deprived of their own upper classes and were reduced to the condition of serfs, as they continued to speak their vernacular (Kolarz 1946:13). For example, in Poland and Lithuania, White Russian and Ukrainian nobles changed to Polish nationality, and in Hungary, the Slovak and Romanian nobles were Magyarized. The people emerged from their long silence after the emancipation of serfs in Russia in 1861 and Austria in 1848, and the gradual disappearance of Ottoman rule from the Balkans. These emancipated people began to form the new middle class of the towns and to reverse the assimilation process.

Religious consciousness may, in some cases, be related to national and linguistic identification. For example, when Greek-speaking Muslims on Crete

had to decide whether they would be Greeks or Turks at the time of the 1923 exchange of populations, they chose to be Turks and were repatriated to Turkey. At the same time, 100,000 Turkish-speaking members of the Greek Orthodox Church living in Anatolia chose to be Greeks and to be repatriated to Greece (Kolarz 1946:20-21).

In the eighteenth century, the Romanians lived under Turkish or Hungarian rule, were Greek Orthodox, and used the Cyrillic alphabet. They were hardly conscious of the Latin origin of their language. When some Romanian priests joined with Rome and established a Romanian Uniate Church, they introduced the Latin alphabet and emphasized the Latin origin of their language. This Roman origin made the Romanian people feel superior over the other Balkan peoples, such as Magyars, Slavs, Turks, and Greeks. They felt themselves to be an outpost of Roman civilization in the East. The various Romanian provinces were politically united in 1918, the final outcome of what had started as historical and cultural research (Kohn 1965:47-48).

Since particular alphabets have been connected with certain creeds, to change an alphabet has been at times practically tantamount to a change of religion. In 1863, for example, the Czar decreed that the Lithuanians had to use the Cyrillic alphabet, but the people preferred to give up literary activity rather than to use the symbol of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Latvians, Estonians, and Czechs rejected the Gothic alphabet of their German overlords. In Albania, there was a battle of the alphabets, where the Greek alphabet was used by the Orthodox, the Arabic alphabet by Muslims, and the Latin alphabet by the modern nationalist movement. In 1913, there was a public burning of Albanian books printed in the Arabic script.

Eastern European ethnic cultural nationalism, which emphasized a culturally homogeneous state protecting cultural authenticity, can be contrasted with nationalism of the Western European variety. The latter can be characterized as liberal nationalism. It has emphasized the state as the provider of universal institutions, civil rights, and social services. Contemporary African and Asian nationalists have been more influenced by the Western European than the Eastern European type of nationalism (Fishman 1972a:117).

Linguistic nationalism may be expressed in a number of different forms, as indicated by Kloss (1967). It may give rise to an urge to adopt or expand a second language or to reject one foreign language in favor of another. In some multiethnic nation-states (e.g. Belgium or Finland), two or three languages may enjoy full equality of status, or one language is selected for national purposes (e.g. Urdu in Pakistan), but otherwise all languages are treated as equal. There are still other cases where the state in theory makes all languages equal but in practice discriminates among them (e.g. the Soviet Union).

10.2 Imperialism

Imperialism, like nationalism, is a term difficult to define with any kind of scientific objectivity, laden as it is with all sorts of ideological impedimenta. Academic sociologists in the past have rarely discussed the subject, and it has

been only in recent years, with the growth of the radical movement in sociology, that the influence of ideas such as those contained in V. I. Lenin's *Imperialism* has reached any currency in standard sociological contexts.

Taken at its simplest, imperialism can be understood to mean the domination or the attempted domination of one nation by another. It need not involve direct administration, as in the case of colonialism. The form of domination may be political, economic, cultural, or even linguistic. It may involve domination of nations or areas of nations overseas, or it may involve contiguous conquest, as in the nineteenth-century drive to the Pacific (from opposite directions) by the Americans and Russians, the former proclaiming their "Manifest Destiny" in subjugating the Indians and Mexicans in their path, the latter, embodying Czarist imperialism, more frankly proclaiming their superiority over the Asiatic peoples they subjugated.

Linguistic imperialism can be understood as the linguistic domination of one nation by another. In its noncontiguous form, except in cases of outright colonialism, it sometimes involves consent on the part of the dominated. A developing nation may have a need for certain products, such as military hardware, agricultural implements, or factory machinery, which need special training for their use and a continuing supply of replacement parts. Natives of the developing country are sent to the supplying nation for training in use of the new equipment and, perforce, must learn the language of the industrialized country. They return to their own country to use the equipment but now must deal with the supplying country on a continuing basis as old machinery or parts have to be replaced. As they do so, they carry on correspondence in the language of the supplying country. The developing country, however, now has a nucleus of persons trained in that language and undoubtedly has begun, if it had not already done so, to teach the language in some of its institutions. Because of this and because of contacts previously established, particularly if these contacts have been satisfactory, the next time a need arises which can be satisfied by an industrialized nation, whether it be industrial equipment or perhaps some specialized kind of training such as nursing or agriculture, there will be a natural tendency to consider seeking the services of the same country, rather than turning to a different country for which natives would have to be prepared in a new language. If they do resort to the same country, their technological, economic, and linguistic dependence on that country is strengthened to the point where it becomes almost impossible to break away. Frequently, the linguistic dependence is further strengthened by the supplying country's providing either free or heavily subsidized language instruction, in either of the two countries.

Economic and technological imperialism is not necessarily always accompanied by linguistic imperialism if, for example, the language of the supplying country is "difficult" or "exotic," particularly if it has a different, difficult writing system. For example, Japanese suppliers do not ordinarily expect to do foreign business in Japanese. Rather, they conduct it in a language of international scope, such as English. The Japanese cannot reasonably expect any significant proportion of the staffs of Toyota or Datsun agencies abroad to learn Japanese.

In a very different situation, Israel extends technical aid to developing nations, not so much to dominate these countries but to garner friends in its struggle for

the right to exist. Training courses for foreign technicians are sometimes given in Hebrew, more often in English or French. Israel itself has heavily depended on English and French, but French influence has been on the wane, as France ceased being Israel's principal arms supplier after the 1967 war. Use of English has been on the increase, as Israel has ended up with a single ally and principal supplier, the United States. The extent to which Israel's continued existence depends on the United States' good will and aid is matched by the position of English as the unquestioned second language of Israel and as dominant in certain fields. For example, the work of chief pharmacists in large Israeli hospitals is almost entirely in English, and both textbooks and libraries at the university level are about 80–90 percent in English, the humanities excepted.

It would be a mistake to assume that the situations just discussed work only to the disadvantage of the less developed country; on the contrary, many advantages are obtained. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that the spread of English throughout the world has been a direct result of the influence of British and American economic and military dominance.

10.3 Colonialism

In recent years, the similarities have been stressed between external and internal colonialism, that is, between overseas colonies and subjugated ethnic groups, such as American Indians, Blacks, and Chicanos in the United States. There is certainly little difference ordinarily in the linguistic results. The language of the colonized is restricted in its use and development and has invariably less prestige, frequently even in the minds of its own speakers. Both types of colonized groups appear to suffer the consequences outlined by Blauner (1969): displacement, deculturation, deautonomization, and subjugation, as well as racism.

Under colonialism, a people is not in full control of its own institutions. Fundamental policies are decided elsewhere, and the colonized must accommodate as best they can. Because of limitations on freedom as well as finances, the colonized have to make the best of whatever kind of school system, if any, is provided by the colonial masters. Decisions concerning linguistic matters will be undertaken with the general goals of colonialist policy in mind. In other words, language is made to play the part of an instrument of colonial policy.

As is the case with all decisions, rationalizations are always readily forthcoming, some of them justified. Thus, a colonial language like English or French, for example, is a key to understanding industrial civilization and reaching out to the broader world. At the same time, it facilitates the colonialist's task if the colonized learn his language rather than vice versa, particularly if in a multilingual society. What then happens is that those who master the colonialist's language tend to become intermediaries between rulers and ruled, and to become the nucleus of a new native elite. They may further become the source of ideas from the outside such as anticolonialism and nationalism.

Different colonial powers have imposed different language policies. In Africa and Asia, the British and Germans tended to use local languages, whereas the

French and Portuguese diffused their own languages. French has remained an element of social prestige for the opportunities it offered. Parents of children in some missionary schools in Africa have even demanded that mission schools stop teaching local languages and teach in French. However, the Islamized populations in Africa showed some opposition to French schools, since they seemed to threaten the teaching of Arabic. As a result, at times sons of slaves or pagans were sent to fill school quotas and acquired a French education that enabled them later on to overthrow the power of the Muslim elites (Alexandre 1972:78). French policy was cultural imperialism, but it was also ethnocentric nationalistic humanitarianism, for the French felt they were giving the best culture which mankind had to offer.

Much of the world has been decolonialized, but the legacy of the colonial period remains to plague the countries of the Third World as they struggle to modernize, industrialize, and liberate themselves from Western economic domination. Some linguistic aspects of this struggle are discussed in Chapter 11.

10.4 Culture contact

When persons from different cultures come into contact, we may speak of the process as *culture contact*. This can extend from very casual encounters to two peoples living side by side for centuries. When people who speak different languages come into contact, they may communicate either through gestures or through some common third tongue. More drastic solutions are either to learn the other people's language or to construct a new one, a simplified version of one of their languages with features of the second, such as a pidgin.

The degree of intensity and length of contact are important variables in predicting the amount of mutual influence that is likely to take place. Thus, merchants, missionaries, travellers, or colonial administrators who, individually or in small groups, visit foreign cultures are likely to learn the local languages but unlikely to have very much impact on them or to spread their own language among the people. On the other hand, a large influx of colonists or traders or the setting up of extensive institutions such as schools to serve the people is likely to result in much linguistic influence. Coterritorial habitation between two linguistically different groups may result in the production of some bilingualism in both groups. The bilinguals may then serve as the medium of transmission of forms or features from one language to the other, as well as cultural exchange.

Changes in the size or composition of a population by virtue of different fertility, mortality, or migration rates can have important effects sociolinguistically. If the subcomponents of the population are characterized by different languages or different language varieties, the languages themselves and the attitudes toward them may change. This is particularly true in countries with a delicate ethnic balance between two different language communities with different population growth rates, as, for example, the French/Dutch split in Belgium, the French/English split in Canada or the English/Afrikaans split in

South Africa. In such cases, the group which is increasing is likely to demand more language rights, that is, that the language be made official in more circumstances and that it achieve full equality with the other language if this has not already been achieved. On the other hand, a group diminishing in size may have to fight vigorously for retention of the language rights it already has, which, however, may be conceded by the other group as a matter of political expediency. Just as members of a society or subsociety with a disappearing indigenous culture may start a nativistic movement to protect and perpetuate their culture, so may a group be especially motivated to perpetuate or revive their ancestral tongue. In some cases, they may establish language academies or schools, urging or encouraging scholars to write grammars or dictionaries of their languages.

Lewis (1972b:11-12) points out that in the Soviet Union, high fertility rates are helping to maintain local languages, even when the language community is losing its importance in numerical terms relative to Russian. In the Soviet Union, as in most developing countries, bilingualism is almost always a characteristic of the male population. The women not only are conservative linguistically but also are far more restricted in their social and intercultural contacts.

Conquests, invasions, deportation, and mass immigration often result in the extinction, superposition, or merger of whole languages. Four types of results can be distinguished: (1) the language of the conquered people all but disappears, as in the case of African slaves taken to the New World, (2) the conquerors adopt the language of the conquered, as in the case of the Norman invasion of England, (3) two populations mingle with wholesale borrowing of vocabulary by one of the languages, as in the case of the Arab conquest of Persia, or (4) varying degrees of societal bilingualism, as in much of the world. In attempting to analyze reasons for the different results, we must not lose sight of the fact that languages do not come into contact under neutral emotional conditions but always produce significant attitudinal reactions. Both social-structural and social-psychological variables must be taken into consideration, especially in dealing with the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

10.5 Acculturation and assimilation

Culture contact almost invariably results in some degree of acculturation, that is, persons of each culture take on some traits, however modified or reinterpreted, from the other culture. The process is rarely symmetrical. Usually one party to the transaction adopts more than the other. That is true in general and also is true of linguistic acculturation specifically. If acculturation of immigrants to the culture of a host society reaches the point where the immigrants (or their descendants) are indistinguishable in behavior and attitudes from the natives, we may say that assimilation has taken place. While it is not unusual for individuals to reach this stage, it has been rather exceptional in modern times for a whole immigrant community to become assimilated and thus virtually disappear as a

separate entity, a process sometimes referred to as amalgamation. Thus, although assimilation is perhaps the limiting case, we may speak of varying degrees of acculturation.

Language plays a most important role in these processes. Not only is language (that of the host society) the most important vehicle for acquiring the new culture, it may be the most important element of the culture being acquired. The extent to which immigrants retain their original language is a matter dealt with in maintenance/shift (see section 10.6). One universal feature of certain stages of the linguistic assimilation process is bilingualism, characterized by large-scale language mixture and code switching. Some linguistic minorities in Europe, such as Basques in France and Spain or German speakers in Belgium are indigenous, whereas Turkish and Yugoslav *Gastarbeiter* (migrant workers) in Western Europe are immigrant minorities. Most linguistic minorities in the United States are immigrant groups.

Factors promoting or retarding the linguistic acculturation of indigenous minorities or of individual immigrants and of immigrant groups as a whole are several. For example, similarities of the two languages, particularly the difficulty of the new language as perceived by those who must learn it must be considered. Likewise, immigrants or other minorities must have opportunities to learn the new language. Thus, an oft-cited reason for the relatively low degree of linguistic acculturation of the Mexican immigrant community in the United States is the fact that Mexicans were imported to do hot, heavy, and dirty work in groups isolated from the outside society, working in mines and fields and living in company housing. Their immediate supervisors were ordinarily bilingual Chicanos, thus obviating the necessity of learning English for mere survival. When they brought their families, they were housed in segregated neighborhoods and attended segregated schools and churches. This isolation was to the detriment of the workers' acquisition of English but to the advantage of the employers, some of whom are now feeling the repressed hostility of generations as expressed through César Chávez' United Farm Workers Union. Once the Mexican workers did learn English, however, they became better apprised of the nature of United States society and began demanding further rights and benefits. This then created a need for the employers to import additional workers from Mexico, who were more docile and unsophisticated, which led to the continuing influx of *braceros*, green-card holders, and undocumented workers all competing with native workers (largely Chicanos) for the scarce, low-paying jobs. In all of this, language has unquestionably played an important part.

As immigrants who live under highly segregated conditions find it difficult to learn the language of the host country, so conversely immigrants who come as individuals and live among the natives (particularly if they marry one) ordinarily learn the language very quickly. Age is another important factor. Small children learn a new language in a matter of months. In a study done by the writer in Israel, immigrants who came in their teens or early twenties had all become very fluent in Hebrew in a few years, whereas of those immigrating after age 35, very few had developed any real facility in Hebrew at all. (For further discussion of linguistic assimilation see section 10.6.)

10.6 Language maintenance and language shift

In multilingual situations, under what conditions does a group strive to retain use of its own language, that is, manifest language loyalty, and under what conditions is a group likely to adopt the language of another group? These are the matters dealt with in the study of language maintenance and language shift, where we observe the relationship between degree of change or stability in language usage patterns, and ongoing psychological, cultural, or social processes. Such study focuses particularly upon situations involving bilingualism without diglossia. Such situations are inherently unstable. There may be different reactions in the spoken and written realms. Where people have become literate before acquiring their second language, reading and writing in the mother tongue will be more likely to be maintained.

Fishman (1972b) indicates that there have been five major language shifts in modern times, namely the adoption of the vernacular for governmental, technical, educational, and cultural activity in Europe; the wholesale adoption of European languages by the native populations of the Americas; the spread of English and French as languages of wider communication for elites throughout the world; the Russification of non-Russian Soviet peoples; and the displacement of imported languages by native languages in much of Africa and Asia.

Fishman (1966) classifies the languages of the United States into indigenous languages (languages of the American Indians); colonial languages, that is, the languages of the European colonizers who settled territories that later became part of the United States (English, Spanish, French, and German, which did survive, and Russian, Swedish and Dutch, which did not); and immigrant languages, those of the immigrants to the United States during the past two centuries, especially during the mass immigration of 1880 to 1920.

Compared with most nations of the world, an astounding number of immigrants and their descendants in the United States have given up their languages and shifted to a new mother tongue. Over 20 million immigrants between 1840 and 1924 were native speakers of some other language. Except for the speakers of colonial languages in the Southwest, in New England, and the Louisiana Bayous, the shift to English mother tongue was quick and free of intergroup conflict, although there has been conflict between generations within each immigrant group. Extraordinary language loyalty has been manifested by Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the United States, but these communities are constantly being reinforced by new immigrants from Mexico and Puerto Rico (see section 9.3). As a result, Spanish is the only major language in the United States, other than English, whose speakers are increasing in numbers.

The United States has put comparatively few restrictions on the public and private use of foreign languages. Nevertheless, foreign languages have shrivelled in its free atmosphere, whereas they had flourished under adverse conditions in Europe. So something other than freedom is operating, as all languages are reduced to the same sad state. Their newspapers die, the schools close, the organizations shift to English, and only a small dedicated group tries to keep the language alive (Glazer 1966:361). Faced with mass education, mass culture, and

the demands of the economy, the immigrants lost the natural supports for language use, except the family, or in some instances, the Church. As the language begins to disappear, public support is sought.

As one ethnic leader expressed the matter, "Now the question no longer is: how shall we learn English so that we may take part in the social life of America and partake of her benefits; the big question is: how can we preserve the language of our ancestors here, in a strange environment and pass on to our descendants the treasures which it contains?" (Trond Bothne, Professor at Luther College, 1898, quoted by Fishman, ed. 1966, flyleaf).

The functions of English as a lingua franca among the different immigrant groups has been an important factor in English acquisition. Those unable to speak English were more likely to be employed in occupations with low income or high unemployment rates (Lieberson and Curry 1971:132). Widespread education has been the most significant factor in acquisition of English by the second generation. Those more segregated were less likely to learn English.

However, the causes of mother-tongue shift need not be the same as the causes of bilingualism. The first is most likely to occur where there is greater linguistic diversity. Frequency of bilingualism in the first generation affects shift in the second. In a pluralistic society, language maintenance can be promoted by such factors as religious and social isolation of the group from the majority society, fostering of schools, and preimmigration experience with language maintenance. Those promoting shift can include military service, intermarriage, compulsory universal education, physical and social mobility, and prestige of certain languages (Lieberson 1970:13-14). It is not necessarily the case that urban dwellers are more inclined to language shift than are rural dwellers. What is true is that cities are generally the place where social movements originate, and depending upon circumstances, the urban environment may promote either language maintenance or language shift (Fishman 1972b:126).

It is similarly not always true that the less prestigious language is replaced by a more prestigious language, unless we define prestige solely as the measure of a language's value in social advance. The definition of social advance is, of course, in itself a knotty problem. But there are numerous cases where a nonstandard dialect has replaced a standard one, for example, the displacement of Lithuanian by a German dialect in East Prussia before World War I, although many Lithuanians spoke Standard German. Similarly in an area of Schleswig, Standard German displaced Danish, only to be displaced, in turn, by a Low German dialect. In another case, Jewish elites in Eastern Europe before and after World War I shifted from a dependence on Russian, Polish, or German to bilingualism with Yiddish. Part of the problem in interpreting such cases is that we know very little about the relationships between language attitudes and language use.

Religion has been a potent factor in the maintenance of Welsh, of French in Canada, of Afrikaans in the Republic of South Africa, of Flemish in Belgium, and Irish in Ireland. The relationship of religion and the maintenance of the vernacular has often been extremely close. Religion normally fosters traditionalism and thus slows down the assimilation process leading to ultimate monolingualism.

Language policy obviously affects language maintenance. Take, for example, the case of Basque, spoken on both sides of the Pyrenees and linguistically unrelated to either Spanish or French (or to any other language, as far as we know). A few centuries ago Basque was much more extensively spoken on the French side of the border than on the Spanish side. Nowadays, the area of Basque speech is much smaller in France than it is in Spain. The apparent reason for the change is the difference in language policy of the two countries. The Spanish government (except during the short-lived Republic and since the accession of King Juan Carlos in 1975) has consistently discouraged, if not tried to obliterate, non-Spanish languages, prohibiting their use for many purposes and hindering their development. One reaction of the Basque people has been a strong nationalistic feeling and pride in their distinct language. In France, on the other hand, a laissez-faire policy has prevailed; since to the government the virtues of French were self-evident, if some people have some other language, that was their loss. The French simply ignored other languages, neither hindering nor helping their development. Therefore, there was no nationalistic reaction of any strength, only a reciprocity of the toleration. Assimilation into the national culture and language was expected because of its self-evident political and economic usefulness (Engerrand 1956). The situation is parallel to the oft-noted function of anti-Semitism in the development of strong Jewish communities and the gradual assimilation of Jews (especially through intermarriage) where anti-Semitism is negligible, as in present-day Scandinavia. (Some doubt is thrown on the above remarks concerning French language policy by the 1978 bombing of the Versailles Palace by Breton nationalists.)

While repression of Basque or Catalan nationalism in Spain may help explain language maintenance among these peoples, it is difficult to sort out cause and effect. The repression of their nationalism has been caused in part at least by the stubborn refusal of these people to become linguistically assimilated to Castilian. It should be pointed out that in the Spanish situation, what is being rejected by the nationalists is not Castilian as such but Castilian monolingualism. They are fighting for a situation of stable bilingualism with diglossia. It may be that the 1975 decrees of King Juan Carlos, legalizing the minority languages, may help bring this about.

In cases where language shift does take place, there is always an intermediate stage of bilingualism as the group passes from monolingualism in one language to monolingualism in the other. There have been, of course, innumerable historical instances of language shift, but what we are witnessing in so many parts of the world today is this transitional situation.

Language shift in immigrant populations, at least in the United States, ordinarily takes place over a period of three generations, unless some very strong factors promoting language maintenance are involved. That is, the first, immigrant generation ordinarily learns the language of the host country to some extent. In the United States, for example, the second generation is usually bilingual, speaking the immigrant language (or both languages, and/or a mixture of the two) at home and in the ethnic neighborhood but speaking English in school and in dealing with members of other groups.

When members of the second generation grow up, they usually speak English to each other and later to their children. The latter, the third generation is thus usually monolingual in English. What is true of language is generally true of the immigrant culture as well, except that one frequently observes the so-called "return of the third generation." This term refers to the situation where the second generation, in its eagerness to become American, rejects the language and culture of the first generation. The third generation, however, sensing the loss of the ethnic language and culture wishes to return to them but generally is able to do so only in a symbolic way (Nahirny and Fishman 1965). To a certain extent the "return of the third generation" has been a strong component in the student demand for language and ethnic studies in the United States, on the part of, for example, Chicano or Asian-American students, most of whom by now are, indeed, of the third generation.

Studying the incidence of language shift of German speakers in Belgium, Luxembourg, and Alsace-Lorraine, Verdoodt (1972:376) concluded that a community can best resist language shift when it can maintain a diglossic functional differentiation between its own language (or languages) and that of the majority. This is most likely to be the case when an indigenous minority has attained legal and economic protection before tendencies to shift gather momentum.

Weinreich (1953a:98) points out that the absence of sociocultural divisions, such as ethnicity, religion, race, age, social status, etc., to reinforce differences in mother-tongue, not only facilitates language shift, but it probably also weakens resistance to interlingual influence.

The factors promoting language shift are not always easy to perceive. It soon becomes obvious to an immigrant, under ordinary circumstances, that he must learn the language of the host country in order to survive. It is not equally obvious to him why his children or grandchildren find it equally necessary or desirable to cast off the immigrant tongue. Sometimes the process starts in the first generation, particularly under conditions of endemic xenophobia. The immigrant himself may overemphasize his allegiance to his new country. Sometimes an immigrant will refuse to speak his own language to his children in the usually mistaken belief that this will facilitate their acquisition of the other language. In such cases it would seem that the immigrant has internalized the host country's antiforeign attitudes and racism, and promoted his own self-hatred. Or children may refuse to speak the ethnic tongue and poke fun at their elders speaking the host language. There is also the phenomenon of the *passive bilingual*, who understands the parents' tongue but cannot (or will not) speak it, and the *covert bilingual*, who speaks the language but refuses to admit it, ashamed as he is of its foreign association (Sawyer 1977). The ethnic's consciousness of this socially generated self-hatred has been a strong factor in the movements for ethnic pride and ethnic self-determination.

In considering conditions under which shift is likely to occur, one has to deal with both linguistic and nonlinguistic factors. Among the latter, the most important would appear to be the nature of the relationship between the

speakers of the two languages in question, that is, between which the shift is taking place. Thus, for example, consider the situation of military conquest. Often the prestige of the conquerors, their language, religion, and culture is such, and the advantages of assimilating to the conquerors' language so obvious and so great, that the subjugated population rushes headlong into a language shift. Witness the rapid shift to Arabic, originally the language of the Arabian Peninsula only, taking place throughout the Middle East and North Africa after the great Islamic conquests started by the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. However, Arabic supplanted the local languages generally only when those languages were closely related to and thus similar to Arabic, as Aramaic in Syria and Iraq, Coptic in Egypt, and various Berber languages in North Africa. All of these languages are members of the Afro-Asiatic family (often called by the earlier term Semitō-Hamitic). The Iranians, Kurds, Afghans, all speaking Indo-Iranian languages unrelated to Arabic, did not shift to Arabic, though they adopted the Arabic alphabet and a massive infusion of Arabic loanwords. The Spaniards, likewise, did not give up their language during seven centuries of Islamic occupation, although Spanish (and Portuguese, too) adopted thousands of Arabic words. There was also some writing of Spanish in Arabic script (*aljamia*). Similarly, Arab conquests in sub-Saharan Africa, India, and the Malayo-Indonesian area did not result in a shift to Arabic, although again the peoples who accepted Islam also adopted the Arabic alphabet and many Arabic loanwords, all the way from West Africa to the Philippines.

A similar instance is that of the Sephardic Jews, expelled from Spain in 1492 and dispersed throughout the Mediterranean region. They have retained their Spanish to this day in the Balkans and Turkey, but in Italy they quickly shifted to the closely related Italian. On the other hand, there has been a large-scale shift (but not very rapid, considering a time span of almost five centuries) to Arabic in the Arabic-speaking countries (except Egypt, where French has been the language of the Jewish home). Because of these variations, obviously nonlinguistic as well as linguistic factors have to be taken under consideration. Thus, the persistence of Yiddish among Eastern European Jews for almost a millennium is perhaps best explained by their geographical, cultural, and social isolation from the surrounding societies, an isolation much greater than that of Jews in the Arab societies. Perhaps linguistic assimilation of the Jews has been roughly inversely correlated with the degree of anti-Semitism. Thus, Yiddish is virtually dying out in the United States, whereas it flourishes, relatively, in the Soviet Union, despite official repression. The Jews are the only ethnic group in the Soviet Union which has no territorial base and for which no provision is made for the education of their children in their own vernacular, that is, Yiddish. There is, however, no educational discrimination of this sort in the case of Russian-speaking or Tadjik-speaking Jews, etc.

An important language shift to Hebrew has been taking place among the multilingual population of pre-1948 Palestine and in the present-day state of Israel. By 1913, Hebrew had become the language of instruction at all levels in Jewish Palestine. At first the revival of and shift to Hebrew was based on belief

and ideology but more recently based on the functions of instrumentality and private need. Acquisition of Hebrew has become a means toward private ends, rather than expression of an ideal (Hofman and Fisherman 1971:343–344).

At times a language or local dialect becomes extinct or dies out. Denison (1977) prefers the term “language suicide” to “language death” because, in most instances, people voluntarily give up speaking a language and teaching it to their children. (It is a delicate matter to identify a dying language because its speakers will ordinarily be offended by this prognostication and will vociferously proclaim that the language is alive and well.) On the other hand, some American Indian communities have asked linguists to record their languages before they are completely lost. Of course, under conditions of genocide, a language may disappear along with the people who spoke it, as happened in the case of the Tasmanians and of some Amerindian peoples. There is also the phenomenon of *linguicide*, whereby there is a deliberate effort to kill off the language, although not its speakers, as the attempt to wipe out Ukrainian in Czarist Russia.

Where the dominant language and the minority tongue are closely related, the dominant group may try not to blot out but to *dialectize* the minority tongue. Thus, for example, the Bulgarians regard Macedonian as a dialect of Bulgarian, not as a separate language, as do the Serbs. The Serbs, on the other hand, treat Croatian as a “variant” of Serbo-Croatian, not as a separate language, as Croatian nationalists insist.

Most usually, a language dies because children no longer learn it. Only the elderly still speak it fluently, whereas middle-aged and younger people may be only semispeakers. As the old people die off one by one, the language goes as well. But in these final stages of transition from bilingualism and/or diglossia to monolingualism and monoglossia, the disappearing language undergoes important changes, including varying degrees of relexification and phonological and syntactic influence from the dominant language. As the domains of use continue to shrink, styles are lost, and speakers end up with a monostylistic language, used in a single domain, the intimate one. As its functions shrink, so do its forms, and the end result may be a pidgin-like language. In other words, a dying language goes through the same stages, but in reverse order, as a pidgin does on its way to becoming a creole, that is, expansion of forms, functions and styles. In both cases also, the pidgin stage is correlated with low social status. Pidgin speakers may continue bilingualism, develop a creole, or adopt a mainstream language. Speakers of the dying language, however, abandon their bilingualism and become monolingual speakers of the mainstream language.

Discussion questions

1. Discuss the relationship between the emergence of the world capitalist system and the origin of modern standard languages.
2. Discuss the relationship between language and nationalism in its “ethnic” and “political” varieties.
3. Describe the linguistic results of colonialism and culture contact.

4. What types of social conditions promote assimilation and language shift on the one hand and cultural retention and language maintenance on the other?
5. Describe the generational differences among immigrant populations with reference to language maintenance/shift.
6. What sorts of conditions lead to the disappearance of a language?