

Multilingualism

LCD 205: Sociolinguistics
Queens College, CUNY

C.N. Serrano Madsen II
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Outline

- Individual Speech
- Multilingualism
- Variety Shift
- Questionnaires

Individual Speech

- What article did everyone find?
 - What as it about?
- What are the topics that everyone is thinking of?

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

New York City

- How many languages are spoken in NYC?
- How many languages are spoken in Queens?
- How many languages are spoken in schools?

New York City

- How many languages are spoken in NYC?
 - ~800 languages
- How many languages are spoken in Queens?
 - 138 languages self identified in Census
- How many languages are spoken in this classroom alone?
 - NYCDOE: 138 languages
 - QC: 110 languages
 - LCD205: ???

Languages in this class

- Spanish
- English
- Arabic
- Bangla
- Portuguese
- Polish
- Fuzhounese
- Mandarin
- German
- French
- 10 Languages

Linguistic Diversity

- 7,102 living languages (Ethnologue, 8 July 2015)
- The world's languages are very unevenly distributed
 - Geographically
 - Demographically

Linguistic Diversity

Percent of World's Autochthonous Spoken Languages by Geographic Area

Europe	~5%
Asia	~30%
Africa	~30%
Pacific	~20%
Americas	~15%

Linguistic Diversity

Two countries, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia--with ~850 languages and ~670 languages respectively--together account for about a quarter of the world's languages.



Linguistic Diversity

- The world's population is also very unevenly distributed by language:
 - The 10 languages with the largest numbers of speakers--
Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, English, Bengali, Hindi,
Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, German Wu Chinese--
are spoken by about half the world's population.
 - The median number of speakers per language is 5,000-
6,000.
 - Over 3,000 languages have fewer than 10,000 speakers.

MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism

- Many people in the world live in multilingual societies.
- Many countries in the world have more than one official language.
- The majority of the world speak more than one language

Multilingualism

- Situations of multilingualism:
 - Diglossia
 - Multidialectalism
 - (Im)migration
 - Colonialism/Imperialism
 - Multiethnic Nation States
 - Urbanization

Types of Bilinguals

- Bilinguals
 - Heritage speakers
 - Simultaneous bilingual
 - Sequential bilingual
 - L2-dominant bilingual
 - L1- dominant bilingual
 - Balanced bilingual
 - Passive bilingual

Native

- Notions of “native” speakerness are difficult and are more about identity than scientific fact.

Use of Multiple Languages

- Two independent languages with own domain
 - Diglossia
- Languages mixing to create new language
 - Pidgins and Creoles
- Using words from one language in another language
 - Borrowing
- Switching between two languages
 - Code Switching

DIGLOSSIA

Diglossia

- *Diglossia*: situations of widespread individual multilingualism in which the different varieties are functionally distinguished.
- The different varieties are called “high” (H) and “low” (L) varieties. The different “sociocultural contexts” in which different varieties are used are called *domains*.

Diglossia

“high” v. “low” varieties in diglossic situations

Domain	High	Low
Sermon in church	+	
Instructions to servants		+
Political speech	+	
Conversation with family, friends		+
News broadcast	+	
Newspaper editorial, news story	+	
Folk literature		+

Diglossia

- Locations with noted diglossia
 - India/Nepal: local language, English, Sanskrit
 - Peru: Aymara/Quechua, Spanish
 - Paraguay: Guarani, Spanish
 - Middle East: local variety, MSA
 - Norway: Bokmål, Nynorsk
 - Alsace: Alsatian, French
 - Jamaica: Patois, English

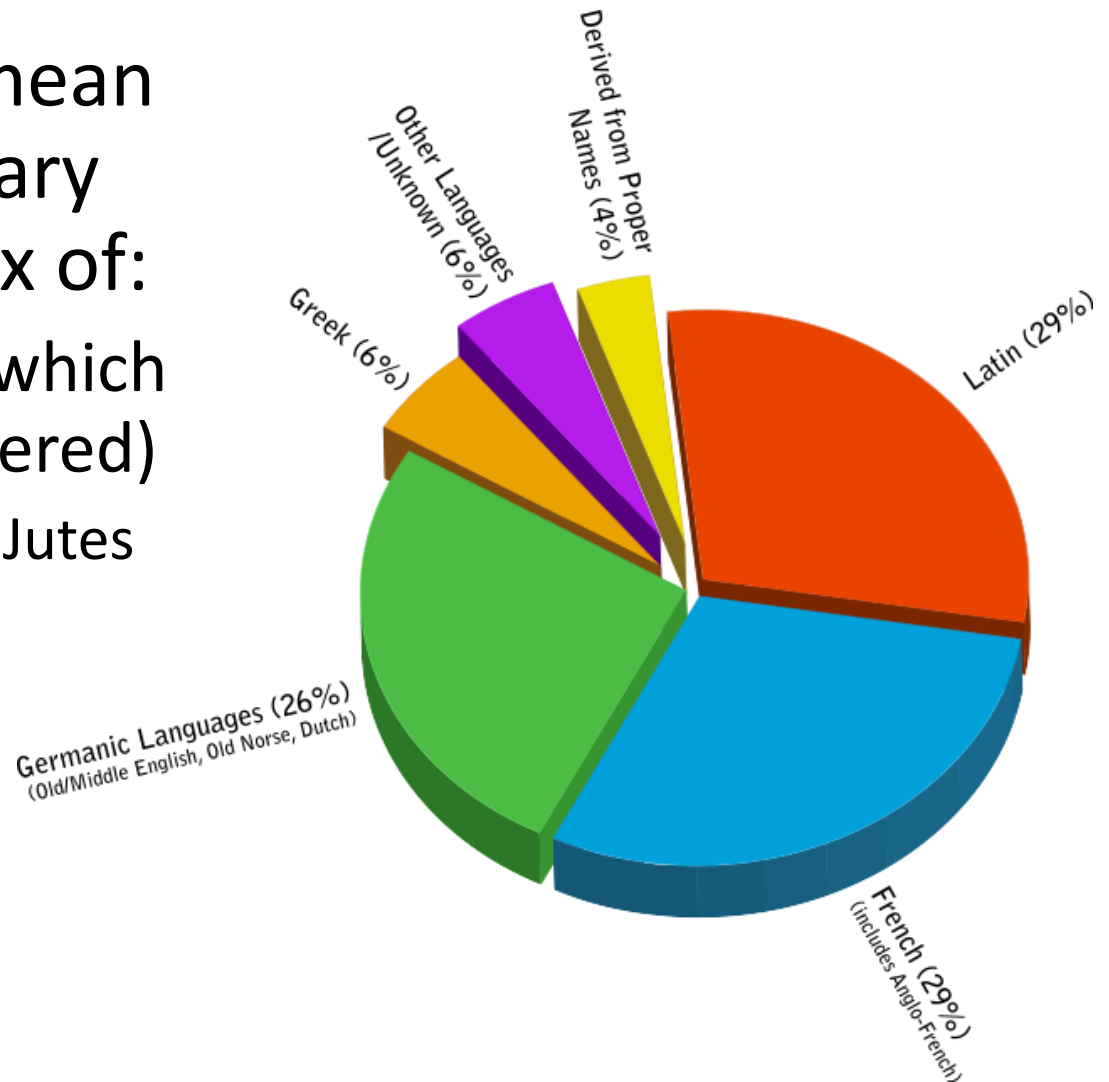
BORROWING

Borrowings

- Languages supplement their “native” vocabulary by borrowing words
 - Vacuum
 - New concept
 - New object
 - For specialized meaning
 - Language Contact
 - Code switching
 - Colonialism
 - Forced use

Borrowings

- These contacts mean that the vocabulary of English is a mix of:
 - 26% Germanic (which English is considered)
 - Angles, Saxons, Jutes
 - Old Norse
 - 58% Romance
 - French
 - Latin



CODE SWITCHING

Code Switching

- Switching between two languages
- Attitudes towards code switching vary by community and status of languages and speakers:
 - Posh
 - “snobby”
 - “affected”
 - Linguistic deficiency
 - “Can’t speak Spanish well”
 - “Spanglish”

Code Switching

- **Posh**
 - English-French
- **Western/Modern**
 - Moroccan Arabic-French in Morocco
 - Egyptian Arabic-French
 - Hindi-English
- **Cultured/International/Exotic**
 - English-Spanish by non-Latino Americans
- **Poor use of language**
 - Spanish-English, English-Spanish in US by Latinos
- **In-group membership**

Multilingualism

- Although the majority of the world speaks multiple languages, things aren't static
- Languages are lost every day!
- Why is that?
 - Why would one abandon one's language?
 - Why would one not transmit their language?

Linguistic Diversity Loss

- This diversity is being lost very quickly!
- One frequently cited estimate is that only half of today's ~6,000 languages will still be spoken in 100 years (Endangered Language Fund, Skutnabb-Kangas 2002).
- Others are more pessimistic. Krauss (1992) predicts that around 90% of the world's languages may die during this period.

Linguistic Diversity Loss

- Boston Brahmin
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfR4DLXYpCw>
- Tangier VA
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIZgw09CG9E>
- Many other Languages
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IncHc6hC0i8>

Variety Change

- Variety change is natural and unavoidable
- Some varieties are disappearing, others are emerging
- Why?
- What happens when people from two different varieties talk to each other?

VARIETY SHIFT

Variety Shift

Some preliminaries:

- *Language shift* is the *process* by which speakers of a given language abandon their language for another language.
- *Language death* refers to the point at which a language no longer has any native speakers.
- Except in rare cases of “radical death”, language shift occurs in cases of multilingualism. That is, speakers in a given speech community have to have something to shift *to*.

Variety Shift

Some preliminaries:

- It's important to keep in mind that languages die through no fault of their own! That is, the causes of language death are never *linguistic*, but rather *social*.
- But people often invoke “scientific” reasoning about what a language “should” be like, in stigmatizing certain varieties!

Causes of Language Shift

- Genocide
- Overt Institutional Oppression
- Economic Factors
- Ideological Factors
- Domain Shift
- Increased Geographic Mobility
- Increased Social Mobility
- Loss of dense social networks

Causes of Language Shift

Genocide

- *Tasmania*. Before white settlement there were ~8,000 speakers of around 10 different languages.
- 1802-1833 white settlement reduced this number to ~300. Remaining aboriginals placed in “settlements.”
- Last aboriginal died in 1847.



Causes of Language Shift

Overt institutional repression

- In many other contexts, languages die or recede as a consequence of institutional pressures.
- In the 17th and 18th centuries, the nation states of Western-Europe often repressed linguistic minorities--Basque, Catalan, Breton, Scottish Gaelic etc.--through policies aimed at excluding them from certain domains, especially schools.

Causes of Language Shift

Overt institutional repression

- In Spain, 18th c. Bourbon monarchs banned the printing of books in languages other than Spanish.
- Spanish was also designated as the language of instruction in schools.



Causes of Variety Shift

Overt institutional repression

- During the Franquist dictatorship (1939-1975) Basque and Catalan were again targeted.
- Basque prohibited in public spaces, education and media.
- Basque names were prohibited from birth certificates and tombstones!



Causes of Variety Shift

Economic factors

- Economics is often a key factor driving shift. Minority language speakers often shift because a dominant language affords social mobility that the ingroup language doesn't.
- Typically, then, in cases of language contact it is the socially/economically less powerful group that abandons their language for that of a more powerful group.

Causes of Variety Shift

- **Economic factors**
- A famous exception to this pattern is the shift of Norman French speakers to English in the 11th century. Over time, the Norman invaders eventually gave up French to English.
- The Norman/English example, then, seems to be a case suggesting that there is “safety in numbers” for minority languages.



Causes of Variety Shift

- **Ideological factors**
- Also *ideological factors*. That is, languages are abandoned partly because of the *social meaning* attaching to them in different contexts. (Recall social motivations of language change!)
- Kulick (1992), studied shift from Taiap--the language of a Papua New Guinean language named Gapun--to Tok Pisin. **89 speakers** at time of his study!



Causes of Language Shift

- **Ideological factors**
- Kulick (1992) argues that the abandonment of Taiap for Tok Pisin is linked to villagers' understandings of “progress” and “development.”
- Tok Pisin was the language of material wealth, Christianity and “coming up” (progress).
- Taiap was the language associated with a deprived past.



Causes of Language Shift

- **Ideological factors**
- Kulick: “The village vernacular has become conceptually tied in the villagers’ thoughts to the past--a past they devalue and strive actively to be free of....[Taiap] must inevitably be abandoned one day, along with the bad habits, heathen ways bush material houses [...] that are currently locking the villagers to their ancestors and to their past.” (1992: 189)



Causes of Language Shift

- Functional Shift
 - In diglossia, each variety has its own function domain. Fishman noted that language loss occurs when this functional distribution is not maintained.
 - Fishman, then, proposes that the key to survival for minority languages not shifting, is boundaries:
 - *The basic desiderata of language-in-culture maintenance are cultural boundaries within which Xish is consensually accepted and relatively protected for certain pursuits.*

Causes of Language Shift

- Functional Shift
 - *Crucially the “home,” “family” and “neighborhoods”--as **the most important domains for intergenerational transmission**--must be preserved by a in order for language loss to be averted. When, a language is lost in these domains occurs, “Xish” is doomed.*

Reasons for Variety Change

- Increased geographical mobility
 - Commuting
 - suburbs
 - increased transport links between different places
- more contact between people from different linguistic backgrounds

Reasons for Variety Change

- Increased social mobility
 - less sharply stratified class system
 - socio-economic growth (better education, housing, jobs etc)
 - more people leaving home to go to university
 - more people working in communities they don't live in

Reasons for Variety Change

- Loss of dense social network structure
 - a wider and looser social network includes people with different varieties
 - dense social networks are traditionally more linguistically conservative (i.e. less prone to change).

Causes of Language Shift

Summary

- Language shift, then, is driven in different contexts by different kinds of forces, often in conspiracy!
- It is crucial to remember that language shift is never driven by linguistic properties of the variety being abandoned. Nevertheless, speakers' understandings of what “good” “bad” languages are like often play a part in language shift.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Using Language

- Understand Language attitudes by doing a sociolinguistic profile
- How and when different language varieties are used
- Directly or indirectly ask questions about language attitudes
- Get a profile of NYC multilingualism as a group

Questionnaires

- 5 Sample Questionnaires about language attitude and use
 - Duan (2004)
 - Guerini (2007)
 - Madsen Serrano (2014)
 - NYCDOE
 - Pletsch (1999)
 - Redinger (2010)

Questionnaires

- What are the questions that probe:
 - Language Use
 - Language Attitude

To Do for Lecture tomorrow

- Find one more scholarly article and be prepared to talk about it in class
- Go over the questionnaires and highlight all the questions that you think are useable, relevant, and easily adaptable for your group to make its own sociolinguistic questionnaire to examine language attitudes and use in multilingual NYC.
- Have read chs. 1, 2, 4, & 6