

Endangered Languages

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Thirteenth lecture (15/05/2015)

Language revitalization through education

Case studies

Recall

- **Language revitalization** (in the broader sense): a cover term for activities aimed at keeping a language alive or bringing it back to life. = Reversing Language Shift (Fishman)
- EGIDS = Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis & Simon 2010)
- „It is the teaching of language, whether in existing or in new educational facilities, that constitutes the most frequently employed tool of language revitalization/language maintenance.” (Wicherkiewicz 2014)

How can a minority language be taught?

Within the general education system (in schools):

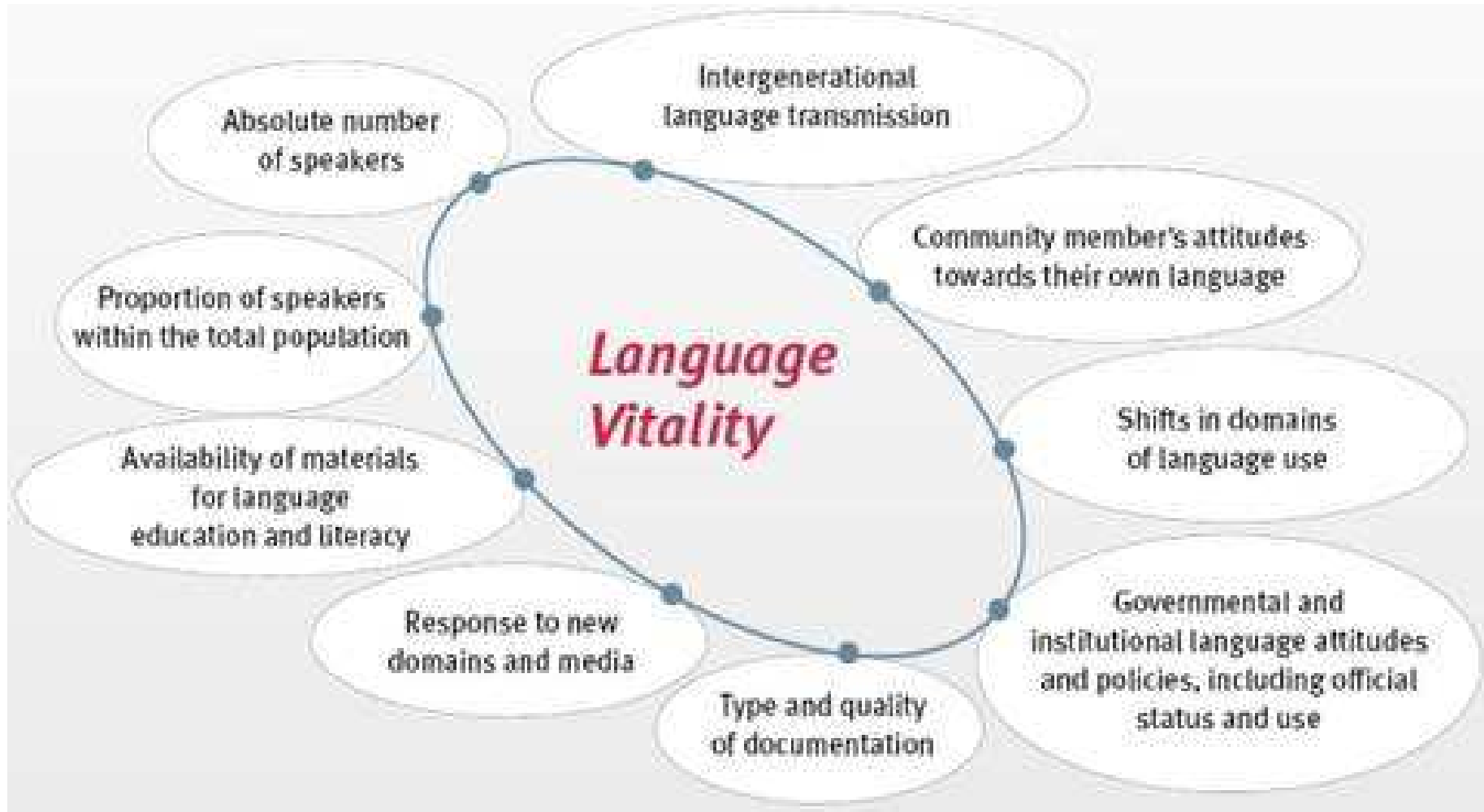
- Language classes as part of the curriculum (medium of education is the majority language)
- Bilingual education (part of the education in the minority language, part in the majority language)
- Minority language as medium of education (all subjects)
 - For children from the minority: special schools
 - For children from the majority: **immersion programs**

Outside of the education system

- Language classes by private or public organizations
- Private lessons
- Teach-yourself material
- Kindergardens, playgroups, child-care by speakers of the language

Which factors decide about the choice of method?

Factors that determine language vitality (UNESCO Atlas)



Language documentation for revitalization and education

„These material artifacts of language analysis and documentaiton are important lifegiving sources for language revitalization and awakening. These artifacts are **only language life affirming when used by language speakers and/or learners.**”
(otherwise they are „Zombie voices)

(Perley, Bernard . 2013. Remembering ancestral voices. Emergent vitalities and the future of indigenous languages. In *Responses to language endangerment*, eds. Kathleen Wheatley et al.)

1: Teaching of „sleeping” (dormant) languages (EGIDS 9, 8b)

Video from the site of the film „The Linguists”

<http://www.pbs.org/thelinguists/For-Educators/Video-Extras.html>

Watch the clip and find out:

- What languages are archived at the University of Berkeley, California?
- Who wants to learn these languages (who were the participants of the workshop)?
- How was learning organized at the workshop?

2. Teaching/transmitting moribund and shifting languages (EGIDS 8a, 7)

- Moribund languages are spoken by (some members of) the grandparent generation, shifting languages have speakers among the parent generation (but they don't speak it to their children)
- A successful form of revitalization using the knowledge of these generations („Elders”) is **language nests**.

Watch the clips and find out how it works!

- Puyuma (Taiwan) <http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/9649>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFmMb6i31EA>
Pinaseki language nest
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHh_P72_fxA Puyuma
language revival
- The language nest story (Canada)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffUTiwsRlag>
- Hawaii:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hWerQcr5Jg>
- Ojibwe Ojibwe language nest:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-llnX2H3aQ>
- ...

Language nests: remember (and read more about it)

- Started in New Zealand (1982, Maori language) and Hawaii (1984, Hawaiian), are now found in many different countries.
- early immersion program: children age 0-6 acquire the language through playing and daily activities with elders

There is no magic to [the language nest], you don't need to teach the language, just speak it. It is so simple and natural it scares people.

Administrator, Secwepemc Nation

*(Early childhood immersion programs in two First Nations Communities. Practical questions answered and guidelines offered;
http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/language-nest-programs_in_BC.pdf)*

It's simple, but...

- What do you need to start and maintain a language nest?
- What problems may occur?
- How can they be solved?

(find answers to these questions in the publications mentioned on the previous slide)

3. Revitalization and maintenance of „less endangered” languages (5-4)

Example: **Scottish Gaelic**

<http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/3049>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwVCrgvvHeE>

There are many **possibilities** to learn the language:

- Preschool institutions and playgroups
- Primary education in Gaelic for children with and without prior knowledge of the language
- Bilingual education (primary and secondary)
- Language courses for adults
- Materials for self-studying

Are these possibilities used?

„Gaelic medium education is increasingly popular throughout Scotland, and the number of pupils who are in Gaelic medium education has risen from **24 in 1985** (its first year)^[1] to **3,583 in 2014**.^[2] The current figure is the highest number of Gaelic medium Education pupils in Scotland since the 2005 passage of the **Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act** by the Scottish Parliament.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaelic_medium_education_in_Scotland

Exercise

„Gaelic medium education is available to all children. Why not give your child the opportunity to benefit from bilingualism?“

Watch two of the clips which were made to convince parents of the benefits of education in Gaelic. What benefits are mentioned? What possible fears of parents are addressed?

- <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/fdp/en/in-the-home/learning-gaelic/>
- <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/fdp/en/in-the-home/using-gaelic/>

Other resources mentioned

- Úlpan, <http://www.ulpan.co.uk>
- Gaelic for parents,
<http://www.gaelic4parents.co.uk/>
- Wicherkiewicz 2014:
<http://languagesindanger.eu/book-of-knowledge/angered-languages-ethnicity-identity-and-politics/#ch9s5>

Further watching

- Film about the gap between the use of Welsh in education and in real life (about 1 hour)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0bgSbJUBG0>

„More and more children in Wales are going to Welsh medium schools. They are the future of the language, but what do they really think about the language and exactly how much Welsh do they speak and use outside the school gates? With an exclusive new survey of young people's opinions on the future of the language, David Williams explores the complexities of a bilingual Wales and the tangled Welsh Knot.”