



Wonderful World of Our Languages “Creating in Language”

Indigenous Language Institute Conference

on

**“Native American Terminology
Development”**

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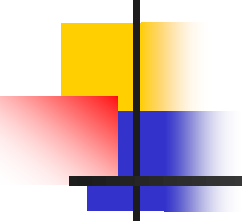
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**UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages
in Danger (17 February 2009):**

**There were approximately 6,700
languages in the world.**

- 
-
- **Of 6,700 languages of the world, 2498 were endangered, i.e. 38%.**
 - **In the United States, there were 192 before 1950, but 53 (28%) became extinct since then -- leaving 139 with one or more speakers.**
 - **Six “degrees of endangerment” are presented:**

- **Safe:** language is spoken by all generations; inter-generational transmission is uninterrupted **(0)**
- **Unsafe:** most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home) **(11)**
- **Definitely endangered:** children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home **(25)**
- **Severely endangered:** language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves **(32)**
- **Critically endangered:** the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently **(71)**
- **Extinct/Sleeping:** there are no speakers left **(53 of 192)**
- **Total number of languages with one or more speakers in 1950: 192**
- **Total number of languages with one or more speakers currently: 139**

- **Unsafe**

Spoken by *most children* in restricted domains

Life expectancy: two generations without immediate intervention

- **Definitely Endangered**

Spoken only by the *parental* generation & up

Life expectancy: 50 years

- **Severely Endangered**

Spoken only by the *grandparental* generation & up

Life expectancy: 30-40 years

- **Critically Endangered**

Spoken only by the *very oldest* (over 70) usually fewer than 10

Life expectancy: 10 years

- **Extinct/Sleeping**

There are no speakers left

Archival materials may exist



At the current rate of decline,

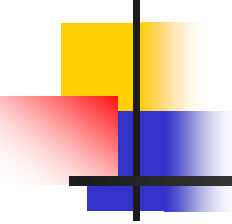
By 2020 Critically Endangered	71	→	68
By 2050 Severely Endangered	32	→	36
By 2070 Definitely Endangered	25	→	11
By 2100 Unsafe	11	→	?



When Two or More Cultures Come into Contact, ...

- **In some traditional communities where one homogeneous group constitutes the total society,**
 - **group identity *vis-à-vis* outsiders is taken pretty much for granted**
 - **such groups often go to great lengths to reduce the incident of cross-cultural contacts**

Here, the names for themselves:

- 
- Taneks ãya “first people”
= Biloxi
 - Tsiloki “people of a different speech”
= Cherokee
 - Tohono O’odham “people of the desert”
= (Papago/Tohono O’odham)
 - Hwalbay “people of tall pines”
= Hualapai
 - Kacháá “people”
= Urarina in the rainforest of Perú
 - Dené “people”
= Navajo
 - Ekweheweh “real people”
= Tuscalora

Any cross-cultural contact will lead to:

- some degree of acculturation
 - learning cultures/languages of each other
 - use both **Language A** and **Language B**
- language shift
 - **Language B** becomes stronger than the original **Language A** and gradually people begin to use more **Language B**
- assimilation
 - Speakers of **Language A** => speakers of **Language B**

Monolingual in Language A => Bilingual in A and B => monolingual in Language B

Or

- resistance to the language shift



People become keenly aware of their own language.

Their language

- **gains special attention and “power,”**
- **becomes a symbol of an underlying group purpose and identity**
= a shorthand for all that make a group special and unique



Language use strategies in cross-cultural contact:

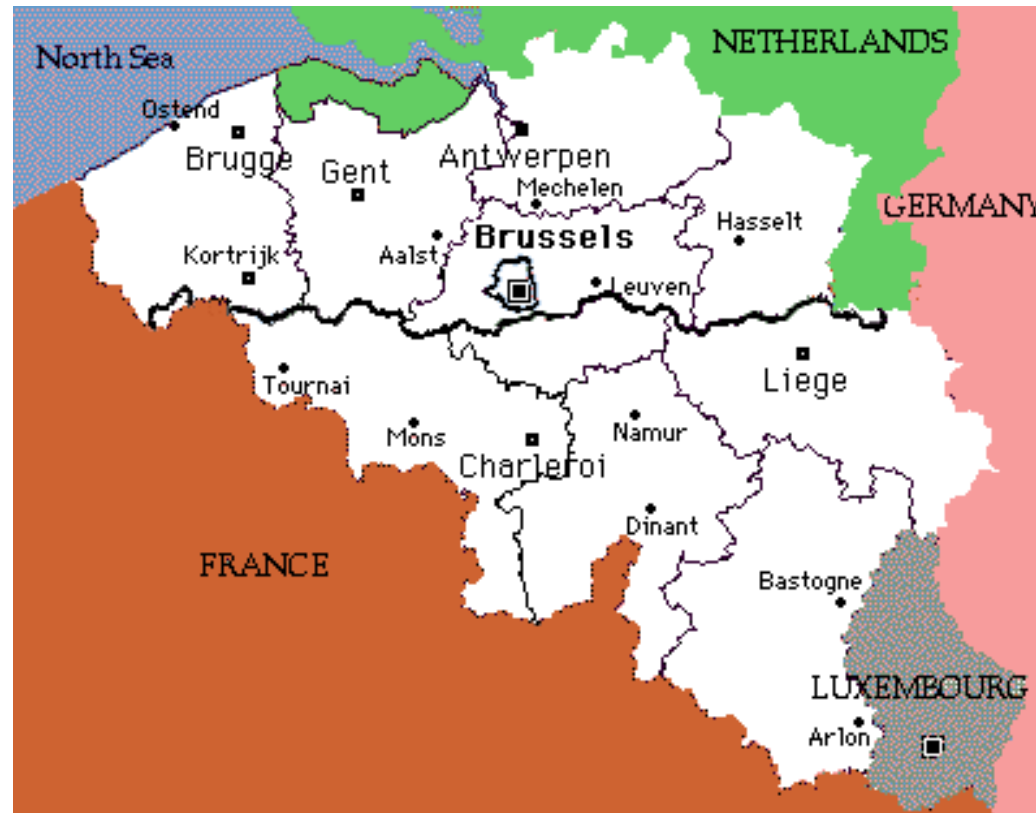
- 1. Protection of the heritage language**
- 2. Bilingualism/Multilingualism
(sometimes with a designated common language)**
- 3. Revival and revitalization of sleeping languages**



1. Heritage Language Protection

- **Unite people in defense of their culture from a perceived linguistic threat
=> restructuring the state along linguistic lines.**

- **Belgium (Walloon/French in the South and Flemish/Dutch in the North)**



■ Switzerland (French, German, Italian, and Romansh)

Geographical distribution of the languages of Switzerland (2000)

- German
- French
- Italian
- Romansh

 bilingual areas and cities*

* Areas with changing majorities, traditionally strong minorities of other official languages (over 30%) and officially bilingual communities.

Officially bilingual are the cantons of

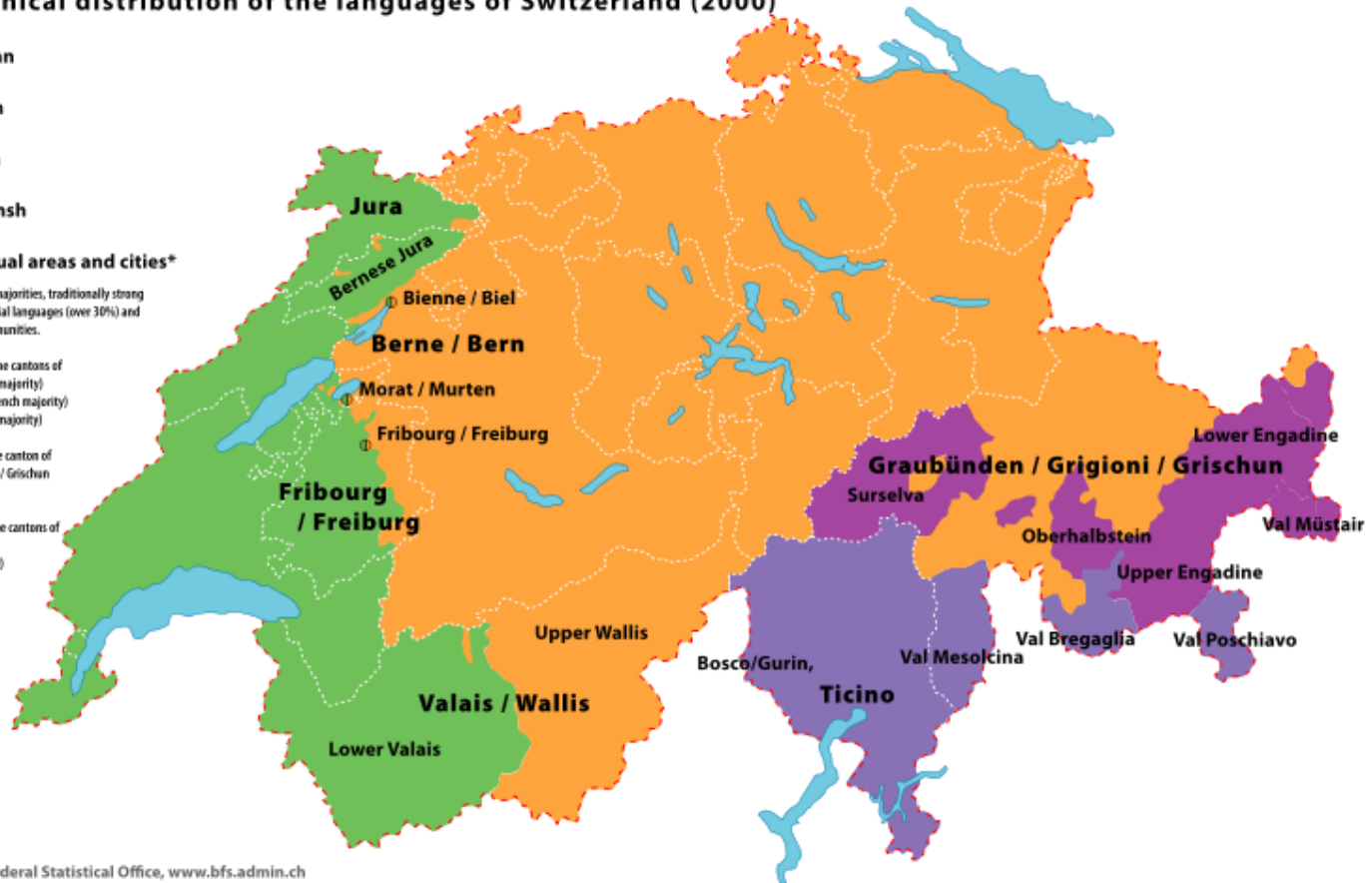
- Berne / Bern (German majority)
- Fribourg / Freiburg (French majority)
- Valais / Wallis (French majority)

Officially trilingual is the canton of

- Graubünden / Grigioni / Grischun (German majority)

De facto bilingual are the cantons of




- Jura (French majority)
- Ticino (Italian majority)





- **USA (a complex multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation)**

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

-  Official English
-  Official English on Ballot
-  No Final Action



2. Bilingualism/Multilingualism

The dominant language is used as a *lingua franca*, while maintaining minority languages.

- Each language has its own place and its own role to play in the nation, e.g. public vs. home, official vs. private.
- Such situation is called “diglossia” or diglossic nation.

■ Paraguay (two official languages, Spanish and Guaraní)





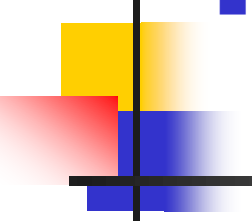
3. Revival and Revitalization

- **Bohemian intellectuals abandoned German (19th c.) and adopted the Czech language as the symbol of their ethnic rebirth.**
- **The Irish called for the abandonment of English, the language of foreign oppression, for a revived Irish Gaelic.**
- **Zionists abandoned one Jewish language, Yiddish, for another, Hebrew.**



Our own languages

- **are being awakened**
 - **from the archives where documented language materials are stored**
- **are learned**
 - **from a few elders who still remember the languages**
- **are being strengthened**
 - **by using the languages at home and in communities**

- 
- **Our language = the language of:**
 - **transmitting our traditions and knowledge**
 - **everyday communication**
 - **close human relations among family members, relatives, community people**
 - **getting mad at you, cussing you, but becoming friends again**
 - **entertaining**
 - **thinking, creating, and imagining.**
 - **the language of identifying who we were, who we are, and who we will be.**
 - **That is, “to live in the language”!**



• **What is morphology?**

**The study of how languages create words;
study of the structure of words.**

- **Morphemes:**

A word may be made of one part:

[teach] or

two parts:

[teach]-[er]

or three (or more) parts:

[teach]-[er]-[s].



Identifying morphemes

- **talked**
 - **talk-ed**
- **unaffordable**
 - **un-afford-able**
- **redoing**
 - **re-do-ing**
- **unhappiness**
 - **un-happ(y)-ness**
- **dehumidifier**
 - **de-humid-(i)f(y)-er**



Choctaw verbs

- **echompatuk** we bought it
- **ilimpatuk** we two (you and I) ate a meal
- **ilohimpatuk** we all ate a meal
- **hashimpatuk** you all ate a meal
- **ishchukkooatuk** you came in
- **haklotuk** he heard it
- **hakloh** he hears it

- *-tuk* = “past.”

- The middle part “*impa*” is the core meaning “to eat.”

- What are the parts that indicate who is doing the action in Choctaw?

- *ilimpatuk* we two (you and I) ate a meal

- *il-impa-tuk* *il-* ‘we two (you and I)’

- *ilohimpatuk* we all ate a meal

- *iloh-impa-tuk* *iloh-* ‘we all’

- *ililhatuk* we two (you and I) danced

- *il-ilha-tuk* *il-* ‘we two (you and I)’

- *ilohilhatuk* we all danced

- *iloh-ilha-tuk* *iloh-* ‘we all’

English

the people involved in the action = *separate words*

the past tense = *ed* attached to the end of the core expression (root) “enjoy” as in enjoyed

Choctaw

- the person involved = attached in front of the root (prefix)
- the past tense = attached to the back of the root (suffix)
- il-* ‘we two’ and *-tuk* ‘past tense’ in ilimpatuk ‘we (you & I) ate a meal’

Chickasaw

1. afama “meet”

ilafama “We (except you) meet him”

kilafama “We all meet him”

2. impa “eat”

iimpa “We (except you) eat”

kiimpa “We all eat”

■ What indicate “we except you” and “we all”?

3. bashli “cut”

ibashli “We (except you) cut it”

kibashli “We all cut it”

4. hilha “dance”

ihilha “We (except you) dance”

kihilha “We all dance”

■ What indicate “we except you” and “we all”?

- il- “we except you” before a root that begins with a vowel.
- ii- “we except you” before a root that begins with a consonant.
- kil- “we all” before a root that begins with a vowel.
- kii- “we all” before a root that begins with a consonant.

- Let’s test our theory:

5. oloshka “tell a lie about”

_____ “We (except you) tell a lie about him”

iloshka

_____ “We all tell a lie about him”

killoshka

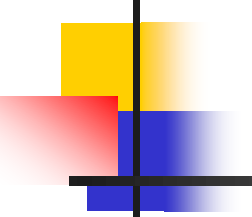
6. paska “make bread”

_____ “We (except you) make bread”

iipaska

_____ “We all make bread”

kiipaska

- 
- In Chickasaw the word for man is *hattak* and the word for woman is *ihoo*.
 - hattak~~at~~ ihooa apila The man helps the woman
 - ihoo~~at~~ hattaka apila The woman helps the man
 - What does at mean?
 - the doer -- ‘who’ is doing it, Subject or Actor
 - What does a mean?
 - the recipient of the action, Object or Patient

- 
- Morphemes such as these are called affixes and they are attached to the root.

- **Prefix** - Root

- Root - **Suffix**

- Ro - **Infix** - ot

- What is the root and what is the affix in the following English examples:

- worked

- work + -(e)d [root + suffix]

- gives

- give + -s [root + suffix]

Inflectional affixes

- do not change the *part of speech*. A verb is still a verb and a noun is still a noun.

Examples:

- the plural *-s* in boys, the past tense *-ed* in worked

Derivational Affixes

- change the meaning of the word and/or change the part of speech.

Examples:

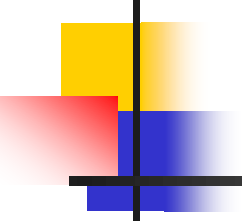
- do - **undo** (opposite meaning by adding the prefix *un-*)
- teach - teacher ('verb' changes to 'noun' by adding the suffix *-er*)
- surf '**verb**' => surf-able '**adjective**'
=> surf-ab(i)l-ity '**noun**'



Derivational Morphemes

- **Comanche**

- **poma** ‘to pick fruits’
- **pomapi** ‘anything picked off, such as fruit, nuts’
- **pomana** ‘the process of picking fruits, nuts’

- 
-
- 1. borrow words from the ‘donor’ culture**
 - 2. use an existing word for a new item by replacing the old meaning to the new**
 - 3. use an existing word by expanding the meaning**
 - 4. create a new word for the new item, OR**
 - 5. of course, they can reject it.**



1. Borrowing (called lexical borrowing or loan words)

Edo	Yoruba	Efik	Igbo	Hausa
ematimatiki	matimátiikì	màtìmátik	sòm	lissafi
emita	mítà	mítà	mítà	mita
abesitosi	àsìbétò	---	àsbestosì	asbestos
ebatirri	bátìrì	bátrì	batìrì	batura
egiafu	gírààfù	gráf	graàfuga	---
eletiriki	lèntíríkì	eletrik	letrìkì	nalantarki
owa	písìn	---	prizìm	firisma
ebobu	gilobu	bóòbíkàn	bolbù	gulab



2. Using already existing terms for new items



Tzeltal Example:

- ***çih*** “deer”

-> [16th century introduction of sheep]

tunim çih

“cotton deer”

-> [sheep became important and deer peripheral]

çih “sheep”

-> ***te'tikil çih***

“wild sheep
= deer”

▪ **Huastec (Mexico):**

- **Precontact:**

biçim “deer”

- **Contemporary:**

biçim “horse”

What then is the term for “deer”?

tenek biçim

“native horse”

- **Kiowa (US Plains):**

tseõiõ “dog”

-> “horse”

Then, what is the term for the “dog”?

tseõiõ hiH

“real horse”



- **Karok (California):**

xuskaú: mhar “bow”

-> “gun”

Then, what is the term for the “bow”?

jarara xuskaú: mhar

“Indian gun

- **Comanche (US Plains):**

kahní “teepee”

-> “house”

Then, what is the term for the “teepee”?

niümiükahní

“Indian house”



3. Metaphorical Extension

Cibecue Apache

- **binii** **face**
 - bita'** **forehead**
windshield
 - bid11'** **eye**
headlight
 - bich9h** **nose**
hood
 - biz4'** **mouth**
gas pipe opening
 - biyedaa'** **chin and jaw**
front bumper

- **bibiye'**

innards

all under hood

bij77

heart

distributor

bijii'iz0l4

lung

radiator

bits'--s

vein

electrical wiring

bizig

liver

battery

bibid

stomach

gas tank

bich'7'

intestine

radiator hose

bi'ik'ah

fat

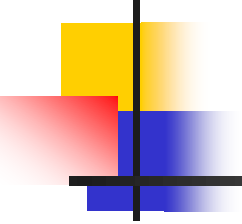
grease

- **bigan** hand and arm
front wheel
- **bikee'** foot
rear wheel
- **bigh1]** back
bed of truck
- **biwos** shoulder
front fender
- **bik'ai** hip and buttock
rear fender



4. Creating New Words

a. Creating New Words with Derivational Affixes

- 
-
- **unable**
 - **unimportant**
 - **unbirthday (Lewis Carol used the new word in “Alice in Wonderland”)**



- **Osage examples:**

- **pazo ‘to point at’ → opazo**

‘index finger’

- **lij ‘to sit, to dwell’ → olij**

‘seat, a place to reside’

- **hiithá ‘to bathe’ → ohiithá**

‘bathtub’



■ Pawnee examples:

- reetsi ‘knife’ + *kuutsu* → reetsikuutsu
‘butcher knife’
- rahkasi ‘dress, shirt’ + *kuutsu* →
rahkasikuutsu
‘coat’
- karitki ‘rock’+ *kuutsu* → karitkuutsu
‘boulder’



b. Creating New Words by Compounding

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| ■ white house | White House |
| ■ black bird | blackbird |
| ■ red coat | Redcoat |
| ■ black mail | blackmail |
-
- Even pronunciation changes:
 - white hóuse vs. White Hòuse
 - What's the difference in meaning?
 - 'a house that is white' vs. Proper Name



- Osge examples of compounds

1. mąze ‘metal’ + ska ‘white’ → mązeska
‘money, silver’

2. hõõpé ‘shoes’ + sce ‘tall’ → hõõpésce
‘boots’

3. hpáata ‘egg’ + zhıka ‘little’ → hpáatazhıka
‘baby’

4. wathıla ‘mind’ + ttąą ‘clever’ → wathılattąą
‘smart person’



■ Here are some more examples of *compounds* from Choctaw:

1. hvpi champuli ‘sweet salt’
 ‘sugar’
2. issi kosoma ‘smelly deer’
 ‘goat’
3. akak chaha ‘tall chicken’
 ‘turkey’

New Terms for computer (compiled by Blake Gentry,
AILDI 1999)

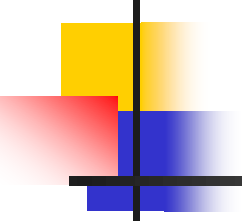
- *usage wakanja kok*
“thing box with brain”
Hoc2k Central Wisconsin
- *nalkidi biyijii' ak'e'el chíhiíkíí*
“the picture box that is written into”
Dine (1) Arizona, New Mexico
- *béésh nitsékeesi*
“an iron like object that thinks”
Dine (2) Arizona, New Mexico
- *kwa îanyud bu:jo*
“metal that you stuff writing into”
Hualapai Northern Arizona
- *mamitihhci'opacihcikanon*
“machine that thinks”
Cree Saskatchewan, Canada



So, what do all these mean?

It means that:

- **creativity does not come about in vacuum,**
- **accumulation of wisdom of our ancestors enables us to be creative.**

- 
-
- **Creating something new does not mean losing the old. But rather,**
 - **the old is breathing in the new.**
 - **That's where the excitement is found in our task of creating new terminology.**



By creating something new,

- **we are letting our people, esp. the younger generation, know that**
 - **our tradition enables us to be creative**
 - **our tradition becomes even stronger,**
 - **our tradition breathes in the new,**

and

 - **our tradition is moving into the future.**
- **That is where our responsibility lies.**



**Gigyayk Vojka!
Walk Strong!**

**Hank yu.
Thank you for listening.**



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