Multilingualism and diglossia

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Next week: Guest lecture 1

Documentation and Revitalization of Endangered Languages

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Multilingualism

Multilingualism

Multilingualism may refer to either (i) personal ability to speak multiple languages, or (ii) situation where multiple languages are spoken in the same community.

It is said that multilingualism is the norm in the world.

Is Japan a multilingual society?

Well, yes. We're speaking English.

The Japanese people tend to think that Japan is a monolingual society.

It is true that the majority of Japan are monolingual speakers of Japanese.

But it should not mean minorities can be ignored. Rather, it might mean that the situations for minorities are more serious, as they are more likely to be ignored.

In which language is there an announcement when a subway train approaches Nagoya station?

Immigrants in Japan

As of 2011, there are 2,047,349 registered foreign residents in Japan.

Chinese 668,644

Korean 542,182

Brazilian 209,265

Filipinos 203,294

Diglossia

Diglossia

A diglossia is a co-existence of two language varieties in the same community. Typically, one variety has low prestige (L) and the other has high prestige (H).

The L variety is used in daily conversation among family and friends.

The H variety is used in education, broadcasting, and written documents.

Diglossia (original definition)

Two distinct varieties of the same language are used in the community.

Each variety is used for quite distinct functions; H and L complement each other.

No one uses the H variety in everyday conversation.

Typical examples of diglossia

Morocco (H: Classical Arabic, L: Morrocan Arabic)

German-speaking area of Switzerland (H: Standard German, L: Swiss German)

Haiti (H: French, L: Haitian Creole)

Paraguay (H: Spanish, L: Guaraní)

Is Japan a diglossia?

If we regard local dialects of Japanese as the L variety, and standard Japanese as the H variety, then many areas of Japan are examples of diglossia.

Diglossia vs. (individual) bilingualism

	diglossia	not diglossia
People are bilingual	e.g. Vanuatu	e.g. US
People are monolingual	e.g. Haiti	?

Polyglossia

Sometimes more than two languages play complementary roles in the same community — which is called *polyglossia*.

Singapore

The H varieties: Mandarin and formal Singapore English

The L varieties: Hokkien, Cantonese, and informal Singapore English

Domains

Domains

A *domain* is the social context, function and topic of the talk that often determine language choice of speakers.

Which variety is used in which domain in a diglossia?

	H/L?		H/L?
Religion	H	Education (textbook)	H
Novels	H	Education (discussion)	L
Newspaper editorial	H	Radio	L
TV news	H	Shopping	L
		Gossiping	L

(Textbook p.27)

Domains do not fully explain our language choice

Sometimes people switch languages even within the same conversation

Code switching

Code switching

Code switching is a shift from one language to another by the same speaker within the same conversation.

Code switching

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLbQrVvGqw0

Code switching

Dialogue between *nisei* (second-generation Japanese immigrants in US)

A: やすと私が今度 drive 代えたのよね。I was in the fast lane.

Of course, speed 出さなくちゃいけないから。

B: Yeah.
A: そしたら、there was a car in the left, right lane.

B: うん。

A: Two ならんで行ったのよね。Side.

B: Uh-huh.
A: So, I was in the こっちの left lane. それでこう来たの。

Nishimura (1985) Intrasentential codeswitching in Japanese and English.

Factors in code switching

When you can't find a good word in one language (*referential function*)

When you want to be understood by someone who has joined the conversation (or, perhaps, when you want NOT to be understood by someone) (*directive function*)

Factors in code switching

Communicative function of code switching

In the New Zealand meeting example in the textbook, Sarah and Mere greet in Maori, although the meeting is held in English

Language shift

Language shift

A diglossia or bilingualism can be stable for generations.

However, often one language takes over the other over time.

when L replaces H

England was diglossia when it was under the French rule (the Norman Conquest of the 11th century)

French did not last in England, although it left a large vocabulary in English (e.g. *pork, beef* vs. *pig, cow*)

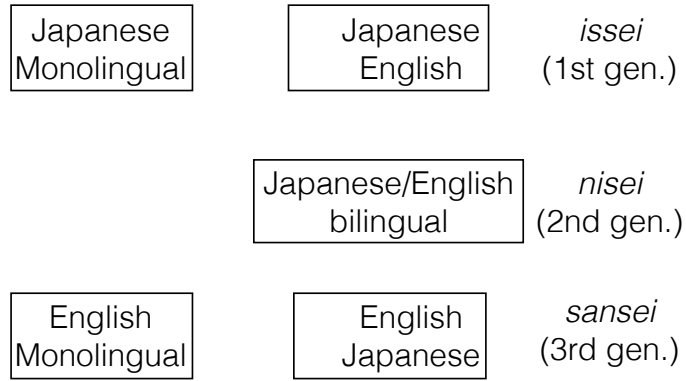Latin used to be the common language for European academia

Language shift in immigrant communities

In case of migrant families in English-speaking countries..

Typically, first-generation immigrants have a limited ability in English.

Second-generation immigrants acquire their parents' languages, but quickly became more comfortable talking in English

In case of typical Japanese immigrant families in US

Japanese Monolingual	Japanese English	*issei* (1st gen.)
	Japanese/English bilingual	*nisei* (2nd gen.)
English Monolingual	English Japanese	*sansei* (3rd gen.)

Migrant majorities

Many of native American languages, Australian aboriginal languages etc. are at the risk of disappearance due to "killer languages" such as English and Spanish.

Maori people in New Zealand were monolingual in Maori until the 19th c. — their language shifted to English via the stage of English/Maori bilingualism.

Japanese vs. Ainu in Hokkaido

Factors in language shift

For many people, proficiency in a stronger language is a path to better jobs and economic success.

A small language will diminish unless active steps are taken to save it.

Language death

A language shift does not always mean language death; even if Japanese immigrants in US shift away from Japanese, the language is still spoken in Japan.
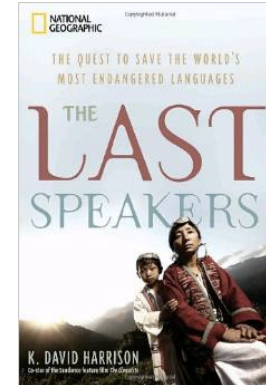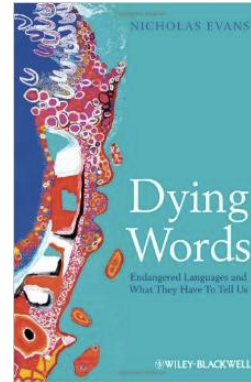
However, if the same language is spoken nowhere else, it means language death.

Last speakers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O89PkSNTtbg

Popular books

Saving endangered languages

Lots of people are working hard to record, save, and revitalize endangered languages, which is the topic of the next week.

Reaction paper

Describe your language choice (or dialect choice). What dimension (domain, addressee, setting, conversation topic, ..) best describes your choice?

Do you think you code-switch? If so, please give an example or explain when it happens.