

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

PROF. NICOLE NAU, UAM 2017

Thirteenth lecture

(29/05/2017)

WHAT HELPS LANGUAGES SURVIVE?

- ❖ Languages in Africa: summary
- ❖ Case studies: Hawaiian and Teko-Émérillon
- ❖ The Catherine Wheel as a model for language revitalization
- ❖ David Crystal's six points



LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT IN AFRICA: VERY SHORT SUMMARY

Effects of colonialism:

- ❖ few national languages,
- ❖ official languages often non-indigenous,
- ❖ language of administration often non-indigenous,
- ❖ language of education typically English and French,
- ❖ language of religion...
- ❖ political borders cut through ethnical and communicative communities

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT IN AFRICA: VERY SHORT SUMMARY

- ❖ Until recently no large-scale language shift to colonial and other «big» languages
- ❖ Language shift to neighboring (small, middle size) languages more common
- ❖ Wide-spread multilingualism (several indigenous languages + languages of wider communication)
- ❖ Mother tongue often less important for identity than clan

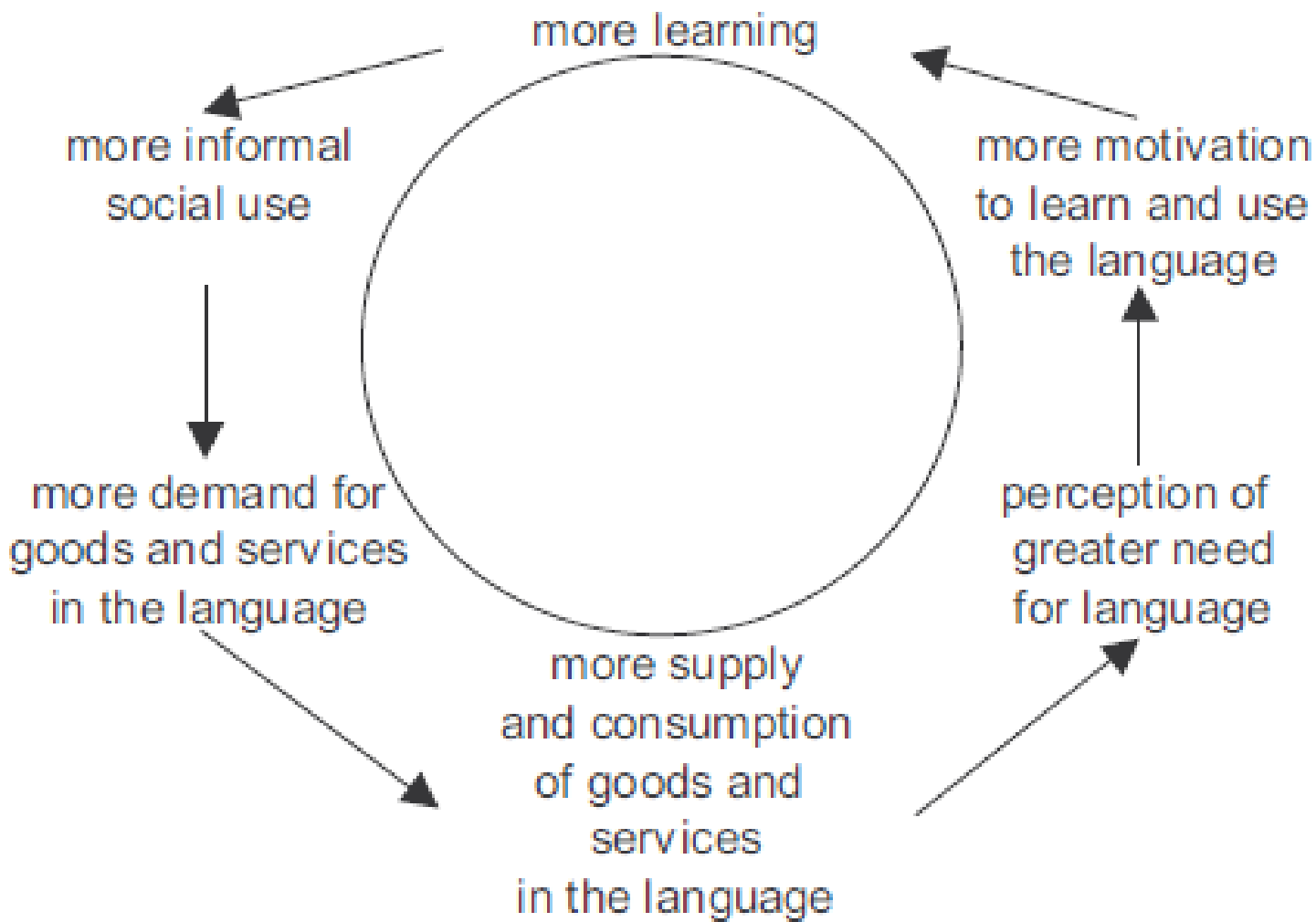
WHAT MAKES A LANGUAGE STRONG(ER)?

Recall: Fishman's GIDS for «reversing language shift»

Alternative model:

The Catherine wheel (Strubbel 1999, from Darquennes 2007)

see next slide



„Strubell makes clear that the functional relationship between

- 1) language competence,
- 2) the social use of a language,
- 3) the presence and demand for products and services in/through that language, and
- 4) the motivation to learn and use that language

needs to be considered when conceptualizing language revitalization measures. In presenting things this way, Strubell avoids a rigid, cumulative and evolutionary description of social change that is inherent in Fishman's GIDS." (Darquennes 2007)

DAVID CRYSTAL: WHAT HELPS A LANGUAGE SURVIVE? 6 POINTS

1. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their **prestige** within the dominant community.
2. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their **wealth** relative to the dominant community.
3. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their **legitimate power** in the eyes of the dominant community.

4. An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the **educational system**.
5. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can **write** their language down.
6. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of **electronic technology**.

HOW IS EACH POINT RELATED TO OTHERS (THINK OF THE CATHERINE WHEEL)? GIVE EXAMPLES!

WRITING + TECHNOLOGY + EDUCATION

Ojibway People and Language App

Teaching
Classrooms
Students
Tribes

Available on...

iPhone Android



The advertisement features a purple background with the title 'Ojibway People and Language App' at the top. Below the title, there are four smartphones displaying different parts of the app. On the left, two iPhones are shown: one displaying a 'Categories' screen with icons for Greetings, Weather, Family, Food, Actions, Body, Numbers, Items, Questions, Medicine, Directions, Animals, and Other; the other displaying a 'Maps' screen with a map of North America. In the center, there is text that reads 'Teaching Classrooms Students Tribes' and 'Available on...' followed by the Apple and Android logos. On the right, two more smartphones are shown: one displaying the 'Categories' screen and another displaying a 'People and History' screen with a photo of a woman and text about the Anishinaabe people.

DAVID HARRISON ABOUT TECHNOLOGY FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxZAbA3NuEM>

Languages mentioned:

Siletz Dee-Ni is an Oregon Athabaskan language, very similar to Navajo, spoken by Siletz tribes once local to northern California through southwest Washington [1:20]

Matukar Panau: This Oceanic language of Papua New Guinea has only 600 speakers who live in just two small villages [2:30]

Tuvan is a Turkic language spoken in the Republic of Tuva in south-central Siberia [3:50]

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/talking-dictionaries/>

WRITING, PRESTIGE, AND LEGITIMATE POWER: TWO EXAMPLES FROM AFRICA





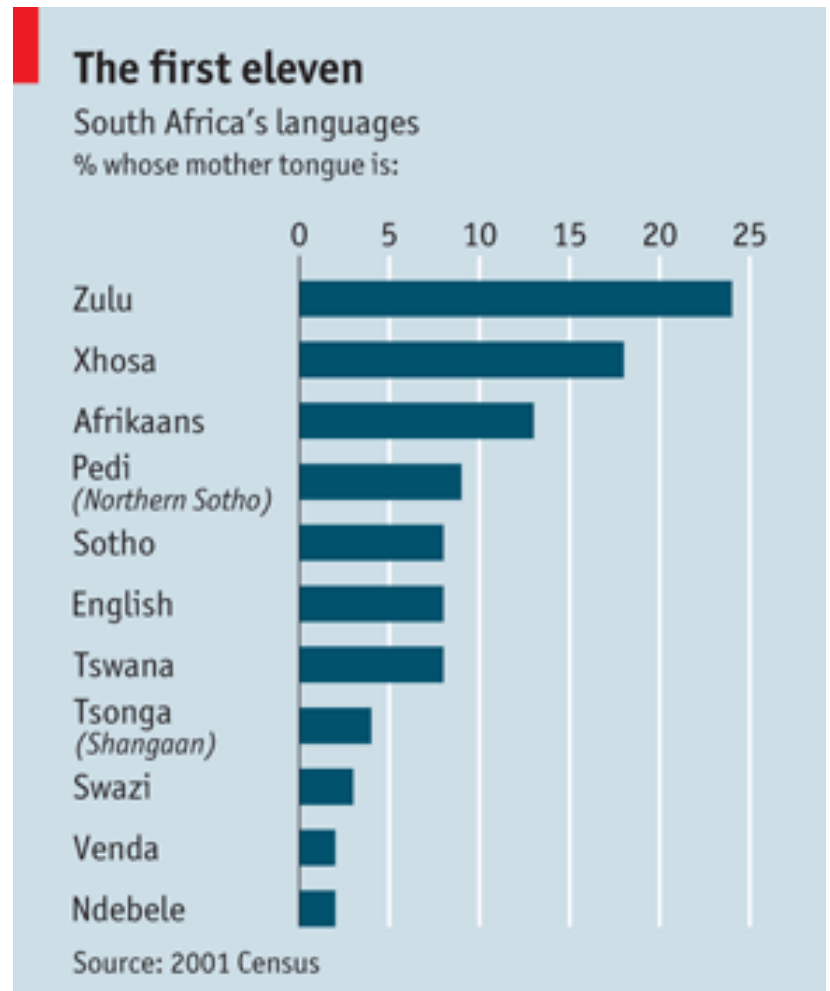
YOMGA OOSISEHO
 HETHNOSIS
 YA VU
 YEMTSETFOSISEHO
 YA POLAOTHEO
 YOMTHEHOSISEHELO
 CONSTITUTIONAL COURT
 LA DINYEWE LA POLAOTHEO
 KHOTHE YA NDAYOTTEWA
 KONSTITUSIONELE HOF
 SHEHELO YA POLAOTHEO

LANGUAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

previous slide: The 11 official languages of South Africa on display at the Constitutional Court.

(Pic: Flickr, copied from:

<http://voicesofafrica.co.za/sisters-fight-save-ancient-african-language-extinction/>)



EDUCATION, POWER, AND WRITING: EXPERIENCE FROM ETHIOPIA (DIMMENDAHL & VOELTZ 2007)

«Whereas Amharic was the dominant language during Haile Selassie's reign, the use of languages other than the national language Amharic became a regular feature of the education system after 1974, when the Derg regime overthrew the emperor Haile Selassie. In this respect, the new government followed a major trend in the postcolonial period of many African countries characterized by a move in the direction of extending the use of African languages for initial literacy and as media of instruction. More recent surveys show that the political decision to teach literacy in fifteen languages in Ethiopia has not been implemented effectively, since almost all the resources of the state ended up being allocated to the three major languages Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromo. It is also to be kept in mind that the minor languages were, for the most part, scarcely used for written communication before the campaigns.»

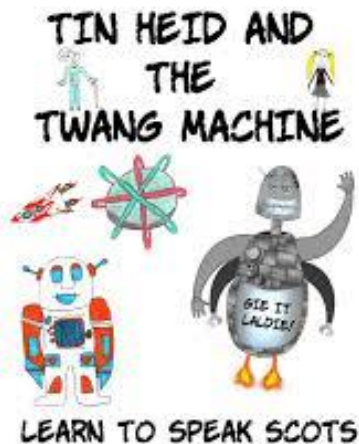
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RAISE THE PRESTIGE OF A LANGUAGE?

1. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community. (Crystal)*

„Prestige comes when people start to notice you. An endangered community therefore needs to make its presence felt within the wider community. It needs to raise its visibility, or profile.” (Crystal)

Write down 3 ideas how to „raise the visibility” of a language! For which grade of endangerment is your idea best suited? What is needed to realize the idea?

PROMOTING SCOTS IN SCOTLAND



Male Toilets
Leithris na bhFear
Menfowk's Lavatories



Female Toilets & Baby Change
Leithris na mBan &
Friotháil Naíonán

Weeminfowk's lavatories an
bairns' hippins cheynge



TOURIST INFORMATION SIGN IN REZEKNE, LATGALE REGION IN LATVIA



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RAISE THE WEALTH OF A LANGUAGE COMMUNITY?

- 2. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.*

Tourism is a good example of a service industry which can bring considerable benefits to an endangered language, as has been seen in parts of Switzerland and northern Italy. (Crystal)

ISAMU SHIMOJI ON MIYAKO (CLIP SHOWN IN THE SECOND LECTURE)

„If we can record CDs like that, or write the books, or pick the *mozuku* seaweed, but instead of selling them with the “*mozuku*” label we sell them with their local name “*sunuzu*”, the impression would be much stronger. Likewise, if we sell the sea grapes [Jap. *umibudō*] not as the “sea grapes”, but with their local name *nkjafu*, the tourists may be surprised: “Japanese words can’t begin with the /N/ sound, can they?”, and thus, intrigued, they will sure reach out for them. And when they read on the package that the content is the sea grapes, they think “ah, so it’s the sea grapes! Might as well buy one, then”. It seems to me that we could in this way combine the language promotion activities with business.”

REFERENCES

Crystal, David. 2000. *Language death*. Cambridge University Press

Dymmendahl, Gerrit J. & Voeltz, F.K. Erhard. 2007. Africa. In *Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages*, ed. Chr. Moseley, 2007

Darquennes, Jeroen. 2007. Paths to language revitalization. In Jeroen Darquennes (ed.), *Contact Linguistics and Language Minorities* (Plurilingua XXX), 61-76. St Augustin.

Strubell, Miquel. 1999. From language planning to language policies and language politics. In Peter J. Weber (ed.), *Contact + Confli(c)t. Language planning and minorities*, 237-248. Bonn.