21   Multilingualism

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1   Introduction

Experts know that multilingualism is not the aberration or minority phenomenon many English speakers suppose it to be. It is, on the contrary, a normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority of the world's population. Although there are no precise statistics on the number or distribution of speakers of two or more languages, linguists estimate that there are roughly 5,000 languages in the world but only about 200 nation-states. This means that there are approximately 25 times as many languages as there are countries. Grosjean (1982: vii) estimates that probably about half the world's population is bilingual and bilingualism is present in practically every country in the world.

It is thus monolingualism which represents a special case, despite the fact that most linguists have paid more attention to it and have taken it to be the norm in their theories of language. Chomsky (1965: 3), for instance, defined the scope of reference for the study of language as follows: "Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly." By contrast, in the heterogeneous communities where multilinguals reside we find instead that individuals are rarely equally fluent in the languages they know. Indeed, a society which produced such individuals would soon cease to be multilingual since no community uses two or more languages for the same set of functions (see section 4).

In this chapter I will use the terms "bilingualism" and "multilingualism" interchangeably to refer to the use of two or more languages. Because multilingualism exists within the cognitive systems of individuals, as well in as families, communities, and countries, it is perhaps inevitable that the study of different aspects of the phenomenon have been parceled out among various subdisciplines of linguistics and related fields of research such as psychology, sociology, and education, to name just a few. For instance, the acquisition of proficiency in another language usually results in some degree of bilingualism,

yet its study is generally regarded as the province of a separate subdiscipline called second language acquisition (chapter 20).

Psychologists, for their part, have investigated the effects of bilingualism on mental processes, while sociologists have treated bilingualism as an element in culture conflict and have looked at some of the consequences of linguistic heterogeneity as a societal phenomenon. Educationists have been concerned with bilingualism in connection with public policy. Basic questions about the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence, whether certain types of bilingualism are good or bad, and the circumstances under which they arise, also impinge on education. Within the field of international studies, bilingualism is seen as an essential element in cross-cultural communication. In each of these disciplines, however, multilingualism is too often seen as incidental and has been treated as a special case or as a deviation from the norm.

Within the field of linguistics increasing attention has been given to the systematic study of language contact and the term "contact linguistics" is now used in a wide sense to refer to both the process and outcome of any situation in which two or more languages are in contact. A related field of research has focussed on particular types of languages called pidgins and creoles which have emerged in instances where the groups in contact do not learn each other's language or some other language of wider communication already in existence (see Romaine 1988). Linguists who study language contact often seek to describe changes at the level of linguistic systems in isolation and abstraction from speakers, thus losing sight of the fact that the bilingual individual is the ultimate locus of contact, as Weinreich (1968) pointed out many years ago. More than half of the nearly four hundred million people around the world who speak Spanish, for example, do so in situations of intensive contact with other languages (Silva-Corvalán 1995: 453).

A variety of textbooks now offer useful overviews of various aspects of the topic of multilingualism (see e.g. Appel and Muysken 1987, Baetens-Beardsmore 1986, Baker 1993, Edwards 1994, Grosjean 1982, Hakuta 1986, Hoffman 1991, Romaine 1995). Here I will confine my coverage to the following topics: 2 Origins of multilingualism: causes and consequences; 3 Individual vs. societal bilingualism; 4 Language choice; 5 Language shift and death. To conclude the chapter, I will say something about the changing character of multilingualism in the world today.

2   Origins of Multilingualism: Causes and Consequences

Multilingualism is a condition of life of considerable antiquity, possibly as old as the human species. With the rare exception of small isolated atoll communities, almost none of which are really isolated anymore, human communities were always in contact with other groups and connected to them

either economically or socially through exchange of goods, knowledge, marriage partners, etc. Yet, the story from Genesis would have us believe that linguistic diversity is the curse of Babel. In a primordial time, people spoke the same language. God, however, decided to punish them for their presumptuousness in erecting the tower by making them speak different languages. Thus, multilingualism became regarded as an obstacle to further cooperation and placed limits on human worldly achievements.

Popular misinformed views on multilingualism are still commonplace. In 1994 media mogul Rupert Murdoch made a speech on Australian radio about the negative effects of multilingualism. His gist was that multilingualism was divisive, and monolingualism, cohesive. Multilingualism was in his view the cause of Indian disunity, and monolingualism the reason for the unity of the English-speaking world.

It takes but little reflection to find the many flaws in Murdoch's reasoning and to come up with cases where the sharing of a common language has not gone hand in hand with political or indeed any other kind of unity. Northern Ireland is one such example from the English-speaking world, which comes readily to mind, but there are many others from other parts of the globe. Certainly, the attempt at Russification of the former republics of the Soviet Union did not ensure unity in that part of the world either. Indeed, one of the first political acts undertaken by the newly independent Baltic states was to reassert their linguistic and cultural autonomy by reinstating their own national languages as official.

Humans have been managing or mismanaging multilingualism for centuries well before modern notions such as "language policy" or "language planning" came onto the scene. Thus, for example, Charles V decided in 1550 to impose Castilian on the Indians of South America. Long before Europeans came to the island of New Guinea the Motu people of the Papuan coast decided to use a simplified version of their language in their trade contacts with outsiders, and traders in Canton markets wrote numbers on slates to which buyer and seller pointed as they negotiated a price.

What is new, however, is the attempt to manage such linguistic and cultural contacts and potential conflicts resulting from them within the framework of agencies of the modern nation-state. The idea of "one nation–one language" is a European notion. In Europe, it has generally been the case that language differences have been associated with distinguishable territories, and later, the nation-states occupying those territories. Language and nation have thus tended to coincide. Because of the identification of national entities with linguistic integrity, heterogeneity has tended to be limited to the frontiers and was for that reason local and peripheral, e.g. the Basques in Spain and France, and the "Celtic fringe" in the British Isles and France. Thus, 25 out of 36 of the European countries are officially unilingual. In most of them, however, there are minorities (both indigenous and non-indigenous), whose languages do not have the same rights as those granted to the official languages. Many indigenous people today like the Welsh and Basque find themselves living in nations that they

had no say in creating and are controlled by groups who do not represent their interests and in some cases, actively seek to exterminate them, as is the case with the Kurds in Iraq. The marginalization of the languages and cultures of minority peoples in the European states can be seen as a form of "internal colonialism."

In sixteenth-century France, for example, the possession of a common language was seen as the key to the egalitarian aims of the French Revolution. Speaking French meant being able to participate on equal terms in the newly established French nation-state. The idea of national unity was that France was to become bound together by common goals, administration, and culture. The French language was and still is symbolic of this unity. Since the revolution French nationalists have seen the persistence of non-French speaking groups and their cultures as threats to the stability and persistence of the union.

However, even by 1863 at least one-fifth of the population was still not French-speaking. As late as 1922 the General Inspector of Schools was to declare linguistic war on Bretons who persisted in speaking their own language: "It is of first order importance that Bretons understand and speak the national language: they will only truly be French on that condition . . . It is Frenchmen that are needed to Frenchify the Bretons, they will not Frenchify themselves by themselves" (cited in Kuter 1989: 77). A few years later the Minister of National Education said that "for the linguistic unity of France, the Breton language must disappear" (cited in Kuter 1989: 78). Even today some of the modest attempts to give Breton a limited place in the education system have been resisted by those who feel that any concessions to Bretons will inevitably lead to political separatism. While Mitterrand's socialist government issued a cautious recognition of France as a multicultural nation, it still advocated the fusion of cultures. Ironically, Mitterrand saw the resurgence of interest in regional language and culture as an effective force against the increasing influence of American popular culture (see section 6).

The boundaries of modern nation-states in Africa and in parts of the New World have been arbitrarily drawn, with many of them created by the political and economic interests of western colonial powers. With the formation of these new nation-states, the question of which language (or which version of a particular one) will become the official language arises and has often led to bitter controversy. Even countries with more than one official language, such as Canada (where French and English share co-official status), have not escaped attempts by various factions to gain political advantage by exploiting issues of language loyalty.

Some political scientists and linguists have used the term "Fourth World" to label indigenous dispossessed minority peoples who have been encapsulated within, and in some cases divided across, modern nation-states, e.g. the Sami and Inuit peoples of the Arctic region. They are people who do not have their own nation-state, but nevertheless regard themselves as ethnically and linguistically distinct from the majority population in the countries where they reside. Their struggle for the right to use their own languages continues too.

More than 80 percent of the conflicts in the world today are between nation-states and minority peoples (Clay 1990).

Although multilingualism itself is often blamed for these conflicts, language is really a symbol of a much larger struggle for the recognition of minority rights. In 1951 Frisian language activists were involved in a street riot in the Dutch town of Leeuwarden protesting the inadmissibility of the Frisian language, spoken by many of the members of the major indigenous minority group, in Dutch courts.

3   Individual vs. Societal Multilingualism

Linguists usually draw a distinction between individual and societal multilingualism, although it is not always possible to maintain. Some countries such as Canada, are officially bilingual in English and French, although not all Canadians are bilingual. There are many more French-speaking Canadians who learn English as a second language than English-speaking Canadians who learn French. In other countries such as India, Singapore, and Papua New Guinea there is a high degree of individual bilingualism with the average person knowing at least two or more languages. In Singapore four languages, English, Mandarin, Tamil, and Malay share co-official status, and most people are bilingual in English and one of the other official languages.

Some of the connections between individual and societal bilingualism become evident when we consider some of the reasons why certain individuals are or become bilingual. Usually the more powerful groups in any society are able to force their language upon the less powerful. If we take Finland as an example, we find that the Sami, Romanies, and Swedes have to learn Finnish, but Finns do not have to learn any of these languages. Similarly, in Britain, the child of English-speaking parents does not have to learn Panjabi or Welsh, but both these groups are expected to learn English. In Papua New Guinea few children know English before coming to school, yet most will still be educated in English because this language policy is a legacy of the country's colonial heritage. The middle-class anglophone parents in Canada who send their child to a French immersion school are, however, by contrast, under no obligation to do so. Many do so, however, as a means of enriching their children's development and because they believe knowledge of another language is an advantage. The co-official status that Singapore attaches to Tamil and Malay (also designated the national language) is not matched by supportive language policies that guarantee their transmission. School outcomes clearly reflect the advantages being given to the Chinese majority (Gupta 1994).

Even in countries where minority languages are recognized for some purposes, what this means varies in practice. By "minority language" I mean one with a relatively small number of speakers living within the domain of a more widely spoken language, whose knowledge is usually necessary for full

participation in society. Swedes in Finland probably have the best legal protection of any minority group in the world. The next strongest position is held by minority languages which have limited (often territorial) rights. This is the case in Canada, where certain provinces are officially declared bilingual, and others, like Ontario (where the national capital lies) are not.

It would be naive, however, to assume that bilingual countries were created to promote bilingualism, rather than to guarantee the legal right to more than one language in a society. We can distinguish between de facto ("by fact") and de jure ("by law") bilingualism. There are often fewer bilingual individuals in de jure multilingual or bilingual states than in those where de facto multilingualism or bilingualism occurs. A good example is Switzerland, where territorial unilingualism exists under federal multilingualism. Although Switzerland is widely cited as a successful example of multilingualism, only about 6 percent of Swiss citizens can be considered multilingual in the country's four official languages: German, French, Italian, and Romantsch. English is much preferred over the other official languages as a second language. Of the 26 cantons, 22 are officially monolingual. Economic and political power is more greatly concentrated among German speakers.

4   Language Choice in Multilingual Communities

In all multilingual communities speakers switch among languages or varieties just as monolinguals switch among styles. The fact that speakers select different languages or varieties for use in different situations shows that not all languages / varieties are equal or regarded as equally appropriate or adequate for use in all speech events. A foreigner who manages to learn a variety of Telegu sufficient to get by on the streets of Hyderabad will soon find out that this particular variety of Telegu cannot be used for all purposes which an English monolingual might use English for. The average educated person in Hyderabad may use Telegu at home, Sanskrit at the temple, English at the university, Urdu in business, etc. He or she may also know other varieties of Telegu, or Kannada, Tamil or Malayalam for reading, dealing with servants, or other specific purposes. Many south Asians have active control over what amounts to complex linguistic repertoires drawn from different languages and varieties. In societies such as these, multilingualism is not an incidental feature of language use, but a central factor and an organizing force in everyday life. In most parts of India, monolingualism would be problematic relative to the norms and expectations about the number of languages and varieties a person needs in order to manage the everyday things a normal person has to do.

Although language choice is not arbitrary, not all speech communities are organized in the same way. Through the selection of one language over another or one variety of the same language over another speakers display what may

be called "acts of identity," choosing the groups with whom they wish to identify (see Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). There are, however, some common motivations for such choices in different societies. The first step in understanding what choices are available to speakers is to gain some idea of what languages and varieties are available to them in a particular social context. Context in this case may be thought of in its widest sense as the varieties made available either officially or unofficially within the boundaries of a nation-state such as Canada, or in a very narrow sense, as the varieties available on a particular occasion, e.g. shopping in an urban market in Kenya, or in a department store in Strasbourg.

4.1   *Domains of use*

In research on the Puerto Rican community in New York City, a team of sociolinguists arrived at a list of five "domains" in which either Spanish or English was used consistently (Fishman et al. 1971). These were established on the basis of observation and interviews and comprised: family, friendship, religion, employment, and education. These domains served as anchor points for distinct value systems embodied in the use of Spanish as opposed to English. A domain is an abstraction which refers to a sphere of activity representing a combination of specific times, settings, and role relationships. They conducted further studies to support their claim that each of these domains carried different expectations for using Spanish or English.

They constructed hypothetical conversations that differed in terms of their interlocutors, place, and topic. The way in which these variables were manipulated determined the extent to which the domain configuration was likely to be perceived as congruent or incongruent. For example, a highly congruent configuration would be a conversation with a priest, in church, about how to be a good Christian. A highly incongruent one would be a discussion with one's employer at the beach about how to be a good son or daughter.

People were asked to imagine themselves in hypothetical situations where two of the three components of the conversational context were given. For example, they might be asked to imagine they were talking to someone at their place of work about how to do a job most efficiently. They were then asked to whom they would most likely be talking and in what language. The respondents tended to provide congruent answers for any given domain, and their choice of language was consistent. The most likely place for Spanish was the family domain, followed by friendship, religion, employment, and education.

In each domain there may be pressures of various kinds, e.g. economic, administrative, cultural, political, religious, etc., which influence the bilingual towards use of one language rather than the other. Often knowledge and use of one language is an economic necessity. Such is the case for many speakers of a minority language, like Gujerati in Britain, or French in provinces of

Canada where Francophones are in a minority. The administrative policies of some countries may require civil servants to have knowledge of a second language. For example, in Ireland, knowledge of Irish is required. In some countries it is expected that educated persons will have knowledge of another language. This is probably true for most of the European countries, and was even more dramatically so earlier in countries like Russia, where French was the language of polite, cultured individuals. Languages like Greek and Latin have also had great prestige as second languages of the educated. As is the case with accent, the prestige of one language over another is a function of the perceived power of those who speak it. A bilingual may also learn one of the languages for religious reasons. Many minority Muslim children in Britain receive religious training in Arabic.

Due to competing pressures, it is not possible to predict with absolute certainty which language an individual will use in a particular situation. In trying to account for the choices made by Buang speakers in Papua New Guinea, a country with as many as 800 languages, we can take as one example Sankoff's (1980: 36) model which views the selections made by speakers in terms of social and situational variables in the speech event, e.g. formality, addressee, etc. Speakers have three languages to choose from: Buang, Yabem, and Tok Pisin. Tok Pisin is a variety of pidgin / creole English now widely used in the country, while Buang and Yabem are indigenous languages associated with different geographical regions. Knowledge of Yabem among the Buang is largely restricted to those who attended mission schools, where the language of instruction was Yabem, spread by Christian missionaries as a lingua franca. Figure 21.1 shows the main factors which serve to define certain types of situations in which particular choices are normally acceptable, appropriate, and likely.

4.2   Diglossia

The choices made by individuals may become institutionalized at the societal level in communities where bilingualism is widespread. Often each language or variety in a multilingual community serves a specialized function and is used for particular purposes. This situation is known as "diglossia." An example can be taken from Arabic-speaking countries such as Egypt in which the language used at home may be a local version of Arabic. The language that is recognized publicly, however, is modern standard Arabic, which takes many of its normative rules from the classical Arabic of the Qur'ān. The standard language is used for "high" functions such as giving a lecture, reading, writing, or broadcasting, while the home variety is reserved for "low" functions such as interacting with friends at home. The high (H) and low (L) varieties differ not only in grammar, phonology, and vocabulary, but also with respect to a number of social characteristics, namely, function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, and stability. L is typically acquired
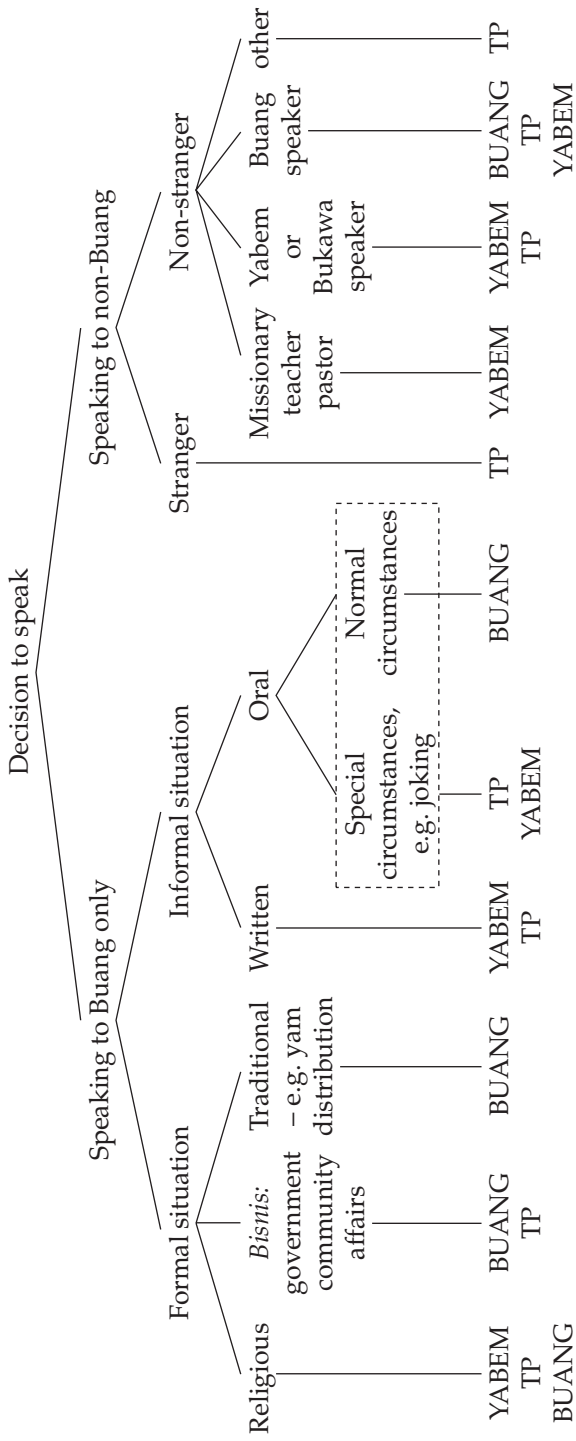
Figure 21.1 Factors affecting language choice for the Buang

Note: TP = Tok Pisin.

at home as a mother tongue and continues to be used throughout life. Its main uses are in familial and familiar interactions. H, on the other hand, is learned later through schooling and never at home. H is related to and supported by institutions outside the home. The separate domains in which H and L are acquired immediately provide them with separate institutional support systems.

Diglossic societies are marked not only by this compartmentalization of varieties, but also by restriction of access. Entry to formal institutions such as school and government requires knowledge of H. The extent to which these functions are compartmentalized can be illustrated in the importance attached by community members to using the right variety in the appropriate context. An outsider who learns to speak L and then uses it in a formal speech will be ridiculed. Speakers regard H as superior to L in a number of respects. In some cases H is regarded as the only "real" version of a particular language to the extent that speakers claim they do not speak L. Sometimes the alleged superiority is invoked for religious and / or literary reasons. For example, the fact that classical Arabic is the language of the Koran endows it with special significance. In other cases a long literary tradition backs the H variety, e.g. Sanskrit. There is also a strong tradition of formal grammatical study and standardization associated with H. The list shows a typical, though not universal, distribution for high and low varieties in diglossia.

Some situations for high and low varieties in Diglossia

	High	Low
Religious service	+	
Instructions to servants, waiters etc.		+
Personal letter	+	
Speech in parliament, political speech	+	
University lecture	+	
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues		+
News broadcast	+	
Radio soap opera		+
Newspaper editorial, news story	+	
Comedy		+
Poetry	+	
Folk literature		+

The analogy has been extended to other communities in which the varieties in diglossic distribution have the status of separate languages, such as Spanish and Guaraní (an Indian language totally unrelated to Spanish) in Paraguay. Spanish serves here as the high variety and is used for high functions. It is the official language of government and education, although 90 percent of the population speak Guaraní, which has the status of national language. Diglossia and bilingualism have been stable there and recent attempts to use Guaraní as a medium of education have met with resistance to extending Guaraní from

intimate into public domains. The notion of diglossia is also sometimes expanded to include more than two varieties or languages which participate in such a functional relationship, e.g. in Tunisia, French, Classical, and Tunisian Arabic are in triglossic distribution, with French and Classical Arabic sharing H functions in relation to Tunisian Arabic, and French occupying the role of H in relation to the other two. The term "polyglossia" has also been used to refer to cases such as Singapore, where many varieties coexist in a functional relationship. English, Mandarin, Tamil, and Malay share co-official status, but each of these has local L variants. A child who speaks Hokkien at home may be schooled in Mandarin Chinese at school. English also functions as an H variety to the other three since it has more prestige.

The relationship between individual bilingualism and societal diglossia is not a necessary or causal one. Either phenomenon can occur without the other one (Fishman 1967). Both diglossia with and without bilingualism may be relatively stable, long-term arrangements, depending on the circumstances. As an example, we can take the Old Order Amish (also called the Pennsylvania Dutch) and Hasidic Jews in the United States. Both groups maintain stable diglossia with bilingualism. They control their own schools. The utilization of the non-group culture is restricted to economic pursuits, and even these are tightly regulated. For example, the Pennsylvania Dutch use electricity for pasteurization of milk, as required by law, but they are not allowed to have it in their homes for refrigeration or for use with farm machinery. The degree to which the outside world is engaged is justified only to the extent that it contributes to the maintenance of the group. By not accepting or implementing the other culture in its entirety, it is kept in strict complementary distribution with their own. English is specifically excluded from home and religious use. It encroaches only in a limited way in economic domains.

Stability, however, is a subjective notion. In some cases indigenous languages can be swamped by intrusive ones over a relatively short period of time (see section 5). There are many bilingual situations which do not last for more than three generations. Immigrant languages, for instance, have disappeared as their speakers have adopted the language of the new environment. This is true for many speakers of south Asian languages, like Gujerati and Bengali, in Britain. In cases such as these of bilingualism without diglossia, the two languages compete for use in the same domains. Speakers are unable to establish the compartmentalization necessary for survival of the L variety. In such instances language shift may be unavoidable (see section 5).

Many attempts to increase the domains of use for a low variety have had limited success, such as in Ireland, where there was no widespread knowledge of the classical written variety, and decreasing use of the spoken language. In Israel, however, the revival of Hebrew has been successful. There the task was to take a language which was widely known in its written form, and to add to it, vernacular use and a native-speaking community. Thus, in Ireland the problem was how to expand the language into H functions which had been taken over by English, and in Israel, how to add L functions to a high variety.

4.3   *Codeswitching*

Although the existence of bilingualism, diglossia, and codeswitching are all often cited as factors leading to language loss, in some cases codeswitching and diglossia are positive forces in maintaining bilingualism. Swiss German and Faroese may never emerge from diglossia, but are probably in no danger of death. In many communities frequent switching between languages serves important functions.

Many linguists have stressed the point that switching between languages is a communicative option available to a bilingual member of a speech community on much the same basis as switching between styles or dialects is an option for the monolingual speaker. Switching in both cases serves an expressive function and has meaning. The speech functions served by switching are presumably potentially available to all speakers, whether bilingual or monolingual, although it may not be possible to attribute only one meaning to a particular switch since switches may accomplish a number of functions at the same time. Moreover, the ways in which these functions are marked linguistically or the degree to which they are accomplished successfully will depend on the resources available in any particular case. In some cases the resources may come from more than one language, while in others they may come from within what is regarded as one language. This is why many linguists use the term "codeswitching"; the term "code," like "variety" is a neutral one and does not commit us to taking a decision as to whether the varieties or codes concerned constitute languages or dialects.

In an early study conducted by Blom and Gumperz (1972) in a rural Norwegian village called Hemnesberget, the concepts of "metaphorical" and "transactional" switching were introduced (sometimes referred to as "non-situational" vs. "situational codeswitching"). Transactional switching comes under the heading of the type of switching most commonly discussed as being controlled by components of the speech event like topic and participants as examined in the example from Papua New Guinea in the discussion of domains.

When residents in Hemnesberget step up to the counter at the post office, greetings and inquiries about family members tend to be exchanged in the local dialect, while the business part of the transaction, e.g. buying stamps, is carried out in standard Norwegian. This would be an example of transactional switching. Metaphorical codeswitching, however, concerns the various communicative effects the speaker intends to convey. For example, teachers deliver formal lectures in the official standard form of Norwegian, but lecturers shift to regional Norwegian dialect when they want to encourage discussion among the students. Thus, while the components of the speech event such as speaker, topic, listener, setting have not changed, the tone of the interaction has been altered by a switch in language.

There is a symbolic distinction between "we" vs. "they" embodied in the choice of varieties. Generally speaking, the tendency is for the minority language

to be regarded as the "we," and the majority language as the "they" variety. The "we" variety typically signifies in-group, informal, personalized activities, while the "they" variety marks out-group, more formal relations. In this example from Panjabi / English switching in Britain, Panjabi serves to mark the in-group of Panjabi / English bilinguals and English, the out-group: *esi engrezi sikhi e te why can't they learn*? "We learn English, so why can't they learn [Asian languages]." Here the speaker makes the point that Panjabi speakers are expected to learn English, but that English people are not required to learn their language. The switch from Panjabi to English emphasizes the boundaries between "them" and "us."

A speaker may switch for a variety of reasons, e.g. to redefine the interaction as appropriate to a different social arena, or to avoid, through continual codeswitching, defining the interaction in terms of any social arena. The latter function of avoidance is an important one because it recognizes that codeswitching often serves as a strategy of neutrality or as a means to explore which code is most appropriate and acceptable in a particular situation. In many government offices in Canada, it is customary for bilingual employees to answer the telephone by saying "Bonjour, hello" in order to give the caller the option of choosing either language to continue the conversation.

In some multilingual exchanges the question of code choice is not resolved because the parties involved do not agree on definition of the domain. We can take an example from western Kenya where a brother and sister are conversing in the brother's store. These siblings are used to conversing on home territory as family members and not as store owner and customer. In such cases where code-choice has not been regularized, it must be negotiated on the spot. The sister wished to conduct the event on the basis of their solidarity as brother and sister because she wanted special treatment as a customer in her brother's store. Therefore, she chose their shared mother tongue, Lwidakho. The brother wanted to treat his sister as a customer and therefore used Swahili, which is an ethnically neutral choice in this speech community and the unmarked choice for service encounters of this type. The utterances in Lwidakho are in italic in this exchange. In some ways this conversation is like what happens in Hemnesberget, Norway, except that the sister does not switch to Swahili once the greetings are over, and the brother does not switch back to Lwidakho to accommodate his sister. The sister then goes away without everything she had hoped for (Myers-Scotton 1992: 144–5).

BROTHER: *Good morning, Sister.*
SISTER: *Good morning.*
BROTHER: *Are you alright?*
SISTER: *Yes, just a little.*
BROTHER: Sister, now today what do you need?
SISTER: *I want you to give me some salt.*
BROTHER: How much do you need?
SISTER: *Give me sixty cents worth.*

BROTHER: And what else?
SISTER: *I would like something else, but I've no money.*
BROTHER: Thank you, sister. Goodbye.
SISTER: *Thank you. Goodbye.*

The preference in market transactions in Jerusalem is for multilingualism, as this example shows, when four women soldiers walk up to look at bracelets outside a jewelry store (Spolsky and Cooper 1991: 108–9):

SHOPKEEPER 1: You want bracelets?
SOLDIER 1: How much?
SHOPKEEPER 1: You want this one or this one?
SOLDIER 2 (*in Hebrew*): Those aren't pretty.
SOLDIER 1 (*in Arabic*): That's not pretty?
SHOPKEEPER 2 (*in Arabic, then Hebrew*): Pretty. Like women soldiers.

The shopkeeper addresses the women first in English even though they are Israeli soldiers and obviously native speakers of Hebrew. Because Hebrew has a higher status than Arabic in Israel, for the Arab to use Hebrew would indicate a subordinate status. By choosing English, he downplays the nationalist dimensions of Hebrew, and opts for the even higher status associated with English. The first soldier accepts this choice of language, which permits the shopkeeper to continue in this more neutral language. The second soldier introduces Hebrew into the exchange to make a comment to her friend. This may be partly a bargaining ploy since she knows the shopkeeper will understand. The first soldier then switches to Arabic, making clear that she is not an English-speaking tourist or non-Arabic speaking shopper who can be taken advantage of. The shopkeeper replies in Arabic and then Hebrew, establishing his own ability to speak Hebrew and reciprocating the soldier's accommodation to his language.

Accommodation is possible here because all parties have the competence to carry on the activity multilingually. Speakers can exercise a choice only to the extent that they can speak a particular language well enough to choose it over some other in a particular domain. As noted in section 1, multilinguals rarely develop equal fluency in all the languages they know. There has been a tendency to regard bilingual competence as the sum of the acquisition of competence in each of the two languages rather than as a unitary system which allows the pooling of resources across both. If the proficiency of a bilingual is evaluated in circumstances where she / he is forced to stay within one code, e.g. in contacts with a monolingual community, then that person's communicative competence will seem less rich than it actually is. Greater proficiency in one language in a particular domain may prompt codeswitching to that language or result in interference from that language in the language less well known. The repertoires of multilingual speakers can be exploited fully in those multilingual settings where they can draw upon the resources from each of the

available codes plus strategies for switching between them. Thus, this example from a Malay / English bilingual recorded by Ozog (1987) is totally unremarkable in the everyday life of the speaker concerned, as odd as it may appear to a monolingual:

> *This morning I hantar my baby tu dekat babysitter tu lah.*
> "This morning I took my baby to the babysitter."

It is difficult to say whether this utterance is basically English with some Malay words, or a Malay utterance with English words.

Popular attitudes towards some kinds of codeswitching, mixing and interference are, nevertheless, often negative, even among community members themselves who engage in this kind of multilingual behavior frequently. Indeed, in the Panjabi-speaking community in Britain many people label examples of the type cited above as *tuti-futi* ("broken up") Panjabi and do not consider it to be "real" Panjabi (Chana and Romaine 1984). In parts of French-speaking Canada the term "joual" has similar connotations. In communities like these there is almost an inherent conflict between the desire to adopt English loanwords as prestige markers and their condemnation as foreign elements destroying the purity of the borrowing language. Haugen (1977: 332) describes the ambiguity felt by Norwegian Americans who did not approve of people from their own group who tried to speak too bookishly, but at the same time they poked fun at those who adopted excessive numbers of English words, calling them "yankeefied." A visitor from Norway commented on hearing this variety of Norwegian that it was "no language whatever, but a gruesome mixture of Norwegian and English, and often one does not know whether to take it humorously or seriously" (Haugen 1977: 94).

A change in political consciousness, however, may lead to a change in attitudes with the result that codeswitching is taken very seriously. In parts of the southwestern USA and California, where codeswitching between Spanish and English is frequent among Mexican-Americans, terms such as "Tex-Mex," "pocho" and "caló" are used to refer to mixed varieties of Spanish / English used by Chicanos (Mexican-Americans). While the terms still have derogatory overtones in some quarters, these mixed codes have come to serve as positive ethnic markers of Chicano identity and are increasingly used in Chicano literature.

5   Language Shift and Death

Choices made by individuals on an everyday basis can also have an effect on the long-term relationships of the languages concerned. Language shift generally involves bilingualism (often with diglossia) as a stage on the way to eventual monolingualism in a new language. Typically a community which

was once monolingual becomes bilingual as a result of contact with another (usually socially more powerful) group and becomes transitionally bilingual in the new language until their own language is given up altogether. In that case we can speak of language death. This is what has happened to the majority of the Aboriginal languages of Australia. For example, the Aboriginal population of Tasmania (ca. 3–4,000) was exterminated within 75 years of contact with Europeans. Some linguists predict that if nothing is done, almost all Aboriginal languages will be dead by the early decades of the twenty-first century (see section 6).

A number of researchers have commented on the extreme instability of bilingualism in the United States. Probably no other country has been host to more bilingual people. However, each new wave of immigrants has seen the decline of their language. Lieberson et al. (1975) report that in 1940, 53 percent of second generation white Americans reported English as their mother tongue. In the previous generation, however, only 25 percent had English as their mother tongue. Thus, this probably represents a substantial shift within one generation. Some groups, however, such as Spanish speakers, have shown an increase in numbers in recent years because they have renewed themselves via new immigration. The United States is now the fifth-largest Hispanic country in the world (see further in section 6).

In Australia the decline of non-English languages has been similarly dramatic. Only 4.2 percent of the Australian-born population regularly uses a language other than English. This figure includes Aboriginal languages too. Yet there are some major differences in the extent to which native languages are retained by the different ethnic groups. Greek-Australians display the greatest maintenance, and Dutch-Australians the least. Different languages are concentrated in different states, although there is no single minority language of equal significance to Spanish in the US (Romaine 1991).

There are many reasons for language shift and death (see the studies in Dorian 1989). In some cases shift occurs as a result of forced or voluntary immigration to a place where it is not possible to maintain one's native language, e.g. Italians in the United States, or as a result of conquest, e.g. the Gaels in Scotland and Ireland. The ultimate loss of a language is termed "language death." Among the many factors responsible for language shift and death are religious and educational background, settlement patterns, ties with the homeland (in the case of immigrant bilingualism), extent of exogamous marriage, attitudes of majority and minority language groups, government policies concerning language and education, etc. While each of these factors may be implicated in shift and death, they do not entirely determine the fate of a language.

Where large groups of immigrants concentrate in particular geographical areas, they are often better able to preserve their languages, e.g. third generation Chinese Americans who reside in China-towns have shifted less towards English than their age mates outside China-towns. Often a shift from rural to urban areas triggers a language shift. For example, in Papua New Guinea, where Tok Pisin is the language most used in the towns, many children grow

up not speaking their parents' vernacular languages. When a language serves important religious functions, as German does among the Pennsylvania Dutch, it may stand a better chance of survival.

The inability of minorities to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their language has often been decisive for language shift. There is a high rate of loss in mixed marriages, e.g. in Wales, where if Welsh is not the language of the home, the onus for transmission is shifted to the school. Identification with a language and positive attitudes towards it cannot guarantee its maintenance. In Ireland the necessity of using English has overpowered antipathy towards English and English speakers. In some cases speakers may be forbidden to use their language altogether, e.g. the Kurds in Turkey. In a community whose language is under threat, it is difficult for children to acquire the language fully.

Languages undergoing shift often display characteristic types of changes such as simplification of complex grammatical structures. These changes are often the result of decreased use of the language in certain contexts which may lead to a loss of stylistic options. In some Native American Indian languages of the southwestern United States complex syntactic structures have become less frequent because the formal and poetic styles of language are no longer used. The degree of linguistic assimilation may serve as an index of social assimilation of a group. It depends on many factors such as receptiveness of the group to the other culture and language, possibility of acceptance by the dominant group, degree of similarity between the two groups, etc. Albanian speakers who emigrated to Greece have more readily given up their language and assimilated than have Albanian speakers in Italy, where attitudes towards diversity are more favorable.

There is no doubt that absence of schooling in one's own language can make maintenance difficult. In a study done of 46 linguistic minorities in 14 European countries, the clearest link to emerge between language and schooling is that a minority language which is not taught tends to decline (see Allardt 1979). Studies of language shift have shown time and time again that schools are a major agent of cultural and linguistic assimilation. Formal education is often the first point of contact children have with the world outside their own community.

English schools were destructive to Dyirbal-speaking children in Aboriginal Australia for several reasons. The very fact that Dyirbal has no presence in the school is a signal that it is seen as a useless language. Schools also provide a major context for the use of English and exposure to English-speaking children. By being immersed into a totally English environment, the Dyirbal child is denied the opportunity of learning in Dyirbal. An educational program of this type is called "submersion" because the child's native language is suppressed or ignored and the children have to sink or swim in a completely different language environment. The aim of such programs is cultural and linguistic assimilation.

In many parts of the world today children are not taught enough of their own language and culture to appreciate it. They become caught in a vicious circle. Because the school fails to support the home language, skills in it are often poor. The failure of the school to let children develop further in their own language is then used to legitimize further oppression of it. At the same time they do not progress in the majority language (often for reasons that have nothing to do with language, but which reflect the poorer socio-economic status of the minority in relation to the majority). The economic returns from schooling are greater for those who are advantaged to begin with.

As a European example, we can take the case of older Sami people in Finland who have been indoctrinated by the school system into believing that the speaking of Sami even at home weakens their children's knowledge of Finnish (Aikio 1984). Uninformed officials in school and health care continue to dispense such advice and are also likely to condemn language mixing and codeswitching as harmful to the child's development. The research evidence shows otherwise, but most of the so-called experts who offer such advice are monolinguals and think of bilingualism as a problem in need of remediation because they are unaware of the realities of normal bilingual development. Beliefs about bilingualism causing stuttering and delayed onset of language are also widespread, despite lack of evidence for them.

Results from so-called immersion programs which aim at enriching children's skills in another language without threat to the language they already know have been very positive in many parts of the world. In Hawaii, for instance, after 80 years of neglect and decline in the native Hawaiian-speaking population, a program of Hawaiian immersion preschools was set up in 1984 called Pu:nana Leo ("language nest"), modeled on a similar program for Maori immersion in New Zealand. This was the first indigenous language immersion program in the USA. At that time there were fewer than 1,000 Hawaiians in the state speaking the language. Fewer than 30 of those were under 18. Immersion education was subsequently extended vertically rather than horizontally in order not to lose any students. The program was introduced into two elementary schools in 1987.

An outside evaluation commissioned by the state's Department of Education concluded that the schools' instruction in Hawaiian had been successful on a number of grounds (Slaughter and Watson-Gegeo 1988). It had been conducted with no apparent loss to the children's English language skills. Parental support and involvement were also exceptionally high. The program has since been expanded to secondary education in 1995. Despite the lack of a library, science lab, and a range of course offerings in the new intermediate / high school program equivalent to what is found at the English-medium high school, each student scored above the statewide average on college admission tests.

However, school is only one and probably not the most important of all the societal institutions that contribute to and are responsible for language acquisition and maintenance. It would be wrong to leave the picture unduly rosy.

Provision of schooling in a minority language will not automatically safeguard its future. While it may seem a great opportunity for children to be schooled in their own language, such schools may attract adverse criticism if financed from tax funding of the majority's government, particularly under times of economic hardship. This is what we are seeing now in Hawaii, where immersion in Hawaiian is supported as part of the state's education budget. This is why Fishman (1991) argues that language maintenance efforts must begin in the community itself through voluntary efforts and be financed through community resources in the early stages. Nowhere have language movements succeeded if they expected the school or state to carry the primary burden of maintenance or revival.

That is not to absolve the state of responsibility, but financial aid comes at a price. Dependence on state resources undermines the minority's responsibility and right to control its own affairs. The greatest danger posed to Maori language revitalization in New Zealand is that in the name of equity and biculturalism the Maori language may be removed from control of the Maori people, and that proficient Maori speakers may be predominantly Pakeha (i.e. Europeans) in both ethnicity and ancestry. A similar phenomenon has affected the struggle for education in Sami in Finland. Even outsiders obtain qualifications in the language more easily than insiders and as a consequence Sami people are afraid of using their own language because only a few are deemed to be qualified (Aikio 1984).

In so far as a minority language represents an alternative point of view, which is potentially in conflict with that of the dominant culture, bilingual education may represent a threat to the powers that be. It is no accident that minority groups who have retained control over their schooling such as the old order Amish in Pennsylvania have shown greater language maintenance than those who have not.

6   The Changing Face of Multilingualism in the Modern World

Two patterns deserve comment in relation to the changing character of multilingualism in the world today. One is increasing bilingualism in a metropolitan language, particularly English. Many smaller languages are dying out due to the spread of a few world languages such as English, French, Spanish, Chinese, etc. It has been estimated that 11 languages are spoken by about 70 percent of the world's population. In this respect, the majority of the world's languages are minority languages. The second is increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in parts of Europe and the USA through continuing and new waves of immigration.

These two processes represent a struggle between increasing internationalization, cultural and linguistic homogenization (Coca Colonization, as it has

sometimes been referred to) vs. diversification. There is a clash of values inherent in the struggle between the global and local, between uniformity and diversity. The language of McWorld is English: not to use it is to risk ostracization from the benefits of the global economy. It is for this reason that many developing countries opted to use the language of their former colonizers rather than try to develop their own language(s). Using English or French in Africa seems to be cheaper than multilingualism. Such utilitarian methods of accounting do not, of course, factor in the social cost of effectively disenfranchising the majority of citizens who do not know English or French in many Third World nations where these are the official languages. Such policies lead to cultural poverty when linguistic diversity is lost. When large portions of the population are denied forms of self-expression, the nation's political and social foundations are weakened. A nation that incorporates cultural and linguistic diversity is also richer than one which denies their existence. It can easily be shown that denying people the right to their own language and culture does not provide a workable solution either.

Ethnicity also grows stronger when actively denied, oppressed, or repressed. Throughout its 74 years of existence Yugoslavia was a powder keg of ethnic rivalries which go back centuries. The country that has been dissolving these past few years was an artificial creation of conflicting cultures held in check by a centralized Communist government until 1980. Once the old regime crumbled, historical tensions could surface leading to the unraveling of the country. The virtual collapse of the economies of the former Soviet bloc countries has shown the difficulties of centralized planning which rides roughshod over the regional and ethnic affiliations.

As far as the trend towards increasing diversity as a result of new immigration is concerned, in the European Union, for instance, 10 percent of the school age population already have a culture and language different from that of the majority of the country in which they reside. This figure naturally obscures wide variation among member states. In The Netherlands, for instance, Extra and Verhoeven (1993: 72) say that the influx of ethnic minority children in elementary schools in the four largest cities is presently about 40 percent and will increase to more than 50 percent in the early twenty-first century. As far as the future demography of the European Community as a whole is concerned, Extra and Verhoeven (forthcoming) state that by the early decades of the twenty-first century one-third of the urban population under the age of 35 will be composed of ethnic minorities.

Australia has also experienced a dramatic shift in its ethnic composition since World War II when its population was 99 percent white and almost entirely English-speaking. The population grew from seven million people of almost entirely British and Irish origin to eighteen million people, nearly a quarter of whom were born overseas and are non-English speaking. Some 75 to 100 immigrant languages are now spoken in Australia (see Romaine 1991).

In the US the projections for increasing diversity in the next century indicate that Hispanics alone may comprise over 30 percent of the total population. If

we calculate the long-range social and economic cost of continuing the present pattern of undereducating these minority children in Europe and the US, the results are enormous. It is these children who will become the majority and upon whom the economic burden will fall of caring for the next generation of children and the previous generation soon to be retirees. At the same time the highly developed technological economies in Europe and the US will require an increasingly highly educated workforce. New member states in the European Union are almost certain to bring with them their own unresolved language problems and tensions between majority and minorities. Thus, conflicts will increase rather than decrease.

In most parts of the world there is little enthusiasm for the languages of immigrant minorities, even when the language concerned is a world language such as Spanish (as is the case in the US) or Arabic (as is the case in France and The Netherlands). This is due to status differences between the majority and minority populations. Distinctive food, dress, song, etc., are often accepted and allowed to be part of the mainstream, but language seldom is. Another irony in the resistance to providing support in the form of home language instruction to immigrant pupils is that opposition to it in the US has occurred side by side with increasing concern over the lack of competence in foreign languages. Thus, while foreign language instruction in the world's major languages in mainstream schools has been seen as valuable, both economically and culturally, bilingual education for minority students has been equated with poverty, and loyalties to non-mainstream culture which threaten the cohesiveness of the state.

7   Conclusions

Multilingualism is shaped in different ways depending on a variety of social and other factors which must be taken into account when trying to assess the skills of speakers and how speakers use the languages they know. It is possible for a bilingual to be fluent in both languages taken together without being able to function completely like a monolingual in either one on its own. The study of the behavior of multilingual individuals and societies thus requires us to go beyond many of the concepts and analytical techniques presently used within linguistic theory which are designed for the description of monolingual.

There is no evidence to indicate that multilingualism is an inherently problematic mode of organization, either for a society or for an individual. Because languages and dialects are often potent symbols of class, gender, ethnic, and other kinds of differentiation, it is easy to think that language underlies conflict in multilingual societies. Yet disputes involving language are really not about language, but instead about fundamental inequalities between groups who happen to speak different languages.