

# **Societal multilingualism**

- Bilingualism and multilingualism are the most obvious and salient **cases of variation** to observe.
- Monolingual speech communities are rare; monolingual countries are even rarer.
- it is rare (and becoming rarer) for linguistic and national borders not to overlap in various complex ways.

# Ways of forming multilingual countries

## ***1/a result of migration***

- voluntary or involuntary
- Migration from the countryside or from small towns to the large metropolitan cities

## ***2/conquest and the subsequent incorporation of speakers of different languages into a single political unit.***

## ***3/Colonial policies***

# Results of the language contact

- The most common result (1st) of this **language contact** has been **language conflict**, producing pressure from one language on speakers of other languages to adopt it.
- The study of **language maintenance** and of **language shift** has thus become a central concern of sociolinguists interested in multilingual societies.

# Language loyalty and reversing language shift

- **language loyalty**, the ability (or lack of it) of speakers of a language to stand up to the pressure of more powerful languages.
- **endangered languages**, languages that are no longer being passed on to children as native languages, but are spoken by a contracting and aging group of adults

# Language maintenance cases

- the immigrant and indigenous languages of the United States when faced by the inexorable power of English
- those who were segregated and isolated by the outside society (e.g. indigenous *Native Americans* , *Spanish-speaking immigrant groups*)

# Language shift

- Language shift has been studied in many parts of the world. There are groups that have worked actively to reverse the seemingly inevitable language shift.
- Cases or revitalization (**reversing language shift**) *the use of Irish in Ireland*, **revitalization** of Hebrew (between 1890 and 1914, mainly in Ottoman Palestine)

# Language and ethnic identity

Why does multilingualism and language contact entail so much **emotional reaction**?

- the **symbolic function** of languages and varieties;
- language organizes thought and in part because it establishes social relations;
- the role of language in establishing social identity adds an additional, non-material dimension to the conflict



# Language and politics

Language is regularly used in the exercise of political power

*(Turkey bans use of Kurdish, Spain in the US, French in Canada, speaking a dialect by politicians).*

# Language rights

- There are a number of possible approaches.

**1<sup>st</sup>**: puts emphasis on **the right of a language to survive (language loss)**

## The 2<sup>nd</sup>:

- to focus on the rights of the speakers of the language

**!** Distinguish between *the rights of the speakers of a language to use it*, and their *rights to maintain it by teaching it to their children*

# ***the rights of the speakers of a language to use it***

- **provision of adequate instruction in the official or national language or languages to all who do not control it—not just children, but new immigrants and temporary foreign workers.**
- **the provision of interpreting and translating services to those who have not yet had the opportunity to learn the national language**

# This first language right

- *is the right to learn the national language,*
- *and in the meantime, to be assisted in dealing with those situations where lack of control of it leads to serious handicaps.*

# **A second right**

**is not to be discriminated against**

in access to work, education, justice, or health service, on the basis of being identified as a member of a group speaking another language

# A third right

concerns the right of a group of speakers of a language to preserve and maintain their own favored language or variety

Another is the issue of **who should pay for the reverse shift efforts.**

# Pidgins and Creoles

- ***A second aspect of language contact*** (the 1<sup>st</sup> is language conflict) is the ***development of distinct varieties of language***

A **pidgin** language is one that evolves in circumstances where

- there are limited relations between the speakers of different languages, such as a market.
- it is not a native language of anyone, but is learned only in contact



# ***3 stages of development of distinct varieties of language***

***Pidgin*** → ***Creole*** → **post-Creole continuum**

***Creole*** is a pidgin once it has native speakers (***creolization***).

***A third stage of development*** when speakers of a Creole or pidgin are introduced, usually by education, to the standard language on which the Creole or pidgin was originally based.

There can ensue what has been labeled a **post-Creole continuum**.

# Diglossia

**Diglossia** is a 3rd aspect of **language contact** (1<sup>st</sup>: language conflict; 2<sup>nd</sup>: development of distinct varieties of language).

**Diglossia** is a situation when 2 distinct varieties of the same language are used, side by side, for two different sets of functions.