



University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Course Outline

Course Outline

Serial no	Name of the content	Content details
1	Course Code	Hum-203
2	Course Title	Language and Culture
3	Course Type	Theory
4	Academic Session	Winter-2025
5	Course Teacher	Md. Ziaul Haque
6	Pre-requisite	N/A
7	Credit value	3
8	Contact hours	42 Hours
9	Total marks	150

Course Summary:

The course delves into various aspects of language and culture, such as self-identity, the role of language in society, language preservation, grammatical structures and the worldwide effects of language. It also explores different languages and cultures globally, specifically those at risk of extinction, and provides an overview of fundamental linguistic principles.

Course Learning Outcomes: at the end of the course, the student will be able to-

CLO 1	Demonstrate a knowledge of language and culture.	Remember
CLO 2	Understand the relation between language and culture in historical and contemporary contexts.	Understand
CLO 3	Apply the relevant cultural and linguistic theories to interpret social relations.	Apply
CLO 4	Analyze the causes of changes of language and culture and its future.	Analyze
CLO 5	Evaluate diverse linguistic and cultural resources and their use	Evaluate
CLO 6	Create a new interpretation and framework in the modern socio-cultural context.	Create

Topics to be covered/ content of the course

Time Frame	Topics	Teaching Strategies		Alignment to CLO
Week 1	Language and Culture: Definition, features,	Lecture, Students' feedback	Oral Question-answer	CLO

Week 2	Relation between Language and Culture Language and society			
Week 3	Language Variation: Standard language and regional language			
Week 4	Language Change: Standardization process, dialect, Pidgin, Creole	Group Discussion, Open Peer Work.	Individual short presentation	CLO2
Week 5	Language and Politics: Role of Language for social identity and social power	Lecture, Group discussion	Assignment and presentation	CLO3
Week 6	Linguistic Diversity, Multilingualism and Globalization	PPT, Showing Diagram.	Quiz Test	
Week 7	Language and Media: Its effect on society and culture	Lecture, Pair work	Oral Presentation	CLO2
Week 8	Gender and Language: Relation, Identity, discrimination	Lecture, Students will create a model or diagram	Asked to explain in class	CLO4
Week 9	Language Shift. Language maintenance, and language death, Endangered Language	Lecture,	Quiz test: MCQ	
Week 10	The cultural diversity of Bangladesh and South Asia	Lecture, Students' feedback	Oral Question-answer	CLO3
Week 11	Race and Ethnicity: Features, differences, Bangladeshi Race and Ethnic Community and their Linguistic Diversity.	Group Discussion, Open Peer Work.	Individual short presentation	CLO5
Week 12	Culture and development: Its relation and influence	Lecture, Group discussion	Assignment and presentation	CLO6
Week 13	Cultural Hegemony: Definition, features, form, and its effects	PPT, Showing Diagram.	Quiz Test	CLO6
Week 14	Diaspora and Culture	Lecture, Pair work	Oral Presentation	CLO2

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

Total Marks	
Per Credit 50 Marks	
3 Credits Course	150 Marks
2 Credits Course	100 Marks
CIE	60%
SEE	40%

Assignment:

The topic or case studies will be given as assignments during the class which they have to prepare at home and will submit on or before the due date. No late submission of assignments will be accepted. Students will have to do a presentation on the given topic.

Quizzes:

One Quiz Test will be taken during the semester, this test will be taken after midterm. No makeup quiz test will be taken. Students are strongly recommended not to miss that test.

Viva-Voce:

At the end of the semester, the students must appear before a board of faculty from their course, who will assess them on topics they have covered. The department may invite external faculty to assess the students.

ASSESSMENT PATTERN

Total Marks Per Credit 50 Marks	
3 Credits Course	150 Marks
2 Credits Course	100 Marks
CIE	60%
SEE	40%

CIE- Continuous Internal Evaluation (90 Marks-60%)

Bloom's Category Marks (Out of 90)	Test (105)	Assignment (15)	Quizzes(15)	External Participation in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities (20)
Remember	10		5	Attendance : 10 Viva-Voce : 10
Understand	10	5	5	
Apply	5	5		
Analyze	10			
Evaluate	5			
Create	5			

SEE- Semester End Examination (60 Marks-40%)

Bloom's Category	Tests
Remember	15
Understand	5
Apply	10
Analyze	10
Evaluate	5
Create	10

Evaluation:

Grades will be calculated as per the university grading structure and individual students will be evaluated based on the following criteria with respective weights.

1. Quizzes	10%
2. Group Assignments	10%
3. Class Participation	10%
4. Term Examination	70%

Learning Materials

Textbook & Learning Resources:

1. The Routledge Handbook of Language and Culture
Edited By Farzad Sharifian
1. Language: The Cultural Tool (Hardcover)
by Daniel L. Everett

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture

Course Code: HUM-203

Week-1

Language

Language is a structured system of communication. The structure of a language is its grammar and the free components are its vocabulary. Languages are the primary means by which humans communicate, and may be conveyed through a variety of methods, including spoken, sign, and written language. Many languages, including the most widely-spoken ones, have writing systems that enable sounds or signs to be recorded for later reactivation. Human language is highly variable between cultures and across time.^[1] Human languages have the properties of productivity and displacement, and rely on social convention and learning.

Characteristics of language

Below you can find the 10 main features and characteristics of a language.

1. Language is systemic (a system)

A language is a structured system of communication which consists of a set of sounds, signs and/or written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country, region or group for talking, writing or communicating.

Language is a system of communication that relies on verbal or non-verbal codes to transfer information. Language is a system of systems!

Sub-systems within language include phonetics and phonology (sounds), morphology and lexicology (words), syntax (grammar), discourse analysis (sentences) and semantics (meaning).

2. Language is symbolic

Almost every single language system ever used by humans is primarily made up of symbols. A symbol is something that stands in for or represents something else.

From Egyptian hieroglyphs to Bislama, a language spoken in Vanuatu, every drawing or sound is a symbol representing meaning.

Symbols can be communicated verbally (speaking the word hello), in writing (putting the letters H-E-L-L-O together), or nonverbally (waving your hand back and forth).

Language is a symbolic system of communication based on a complex system of rules relating to spoken, signed, or written symbols.

3. Language is systematic

Although language is symbolic, its symbols are arranged in a particular system, not in random manners.

For example, If we regard a language as being made up of sounds, we find out that only certain sounds occur in any one language that these occur in certain regular and predictable patterns.

Certain sounds do not exist in certain languages. This makes a language mutually intelligible.

4. Language is social

Language is social in that interaction with other persons is psychologically necessary to learn language.

We use language to be in a community, to communicate with others. We depend on others when learning language, and we constantly borrow one another's uses of expression.

Language helps us perform various social functions, and many of its uses have become institutionalised.

Language use is also part of social identity. I speak French therefore I share some characteristics, attitudes with other French speakers.

5. Language is arbitrary

Swiss linguist De Saussure claimed that language is arbitrary because of the lack of a natural relationship between the signifier (language form) and the signified (referent).

The sounds of a word gives very little to no clue to the meaning of the word. When you say or write dog, it doesn't really gives us any clue to what it means.

The word doesn't even sound like a barking dog. However, some linguists claim that is not entirely true.

There are cases where language is not arbitrary. Take onomatopoeias like woof-woof, for example.

These words do give clues as to their meaning and, we, adults, use them to help children learn language.

6. Language is cultural

Language is one of the most important parts of any culture. Culture as a whole is transmitted through language.

The fact that humankind has a history in the sense that animals do not is entirely the result of language.

We learn about the culture of a new country, our own culture thanks to language.

Language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. As a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it has an important social function and fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity.

It is the means by which culture and its traditions and shared values may be conveyed and preserved.

The opposite is true also. Language is transmitted through culture: a language is passed on from one generation to the next in a community.

7. Language is dynamic

Language is dynamic because it is always changing, evolving, and adapting to the needs of its users.

The language we use today is different from the language our parents used and different from that used in Middle Ages.

New words appear regularly. Dictionaries change. Pronunciation differs. Even grammar rules evolve.

As long as the needs of language users continue to change, so will the language.

Language is constantly adapting and changing to reflect our changing lives, experiences and cultures. Language change enables us to accommodate new ideas, inventions and technologies.

It's not just the words themselves which change; the way in which we use them can shift too. But languages are also dynamic in the way that whole systems (a complete language) die.

8. Language is variation

Language is variation. There is more than one way of saying the same thing. Speakers may vary pronunciation (accent), word choice (lexicon), or morphology and syntax (grammar).

Variation happens for many different reasons. Sociolinguistics, the study of social factors affecting language, is based on the ideas that language varies because of different social reasons such as age, race, gender, social-economic status, geography, etc.

9. Language is meaningful

A language signal/symbol always conveys meaning. In linguistic terms, all the symbols/signals of language have a semantic content.

The semantic content means each symbol is associated to something in the real world.

Humans are able to give the same symbol a meaning, and very often, more than one meaning, and they're still able to distinguish all of them.

10. Language is human

Language is human as it differs from animal communication in several ways. The characteristics highlighted above set apart language from animal communication forms.

Some of these features may be part of animal communication; yet they do not form part of it in its entirety.

What is Culture?

Defining culture may be likened to defining air. We can't see it, but it's there just the same. We live in it. It lives in us.

Like air culture is invisible but its constant presence and influence on everything we do make it indispensable that we cannot live without it.

And like air, technical definitions of culture abound, some of the more helpful definitions of culture given by anthropologist and sociologist include:

Culture is patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting to various situations and actions — (Kluckhohn 1954).

Culture is a set of imperfectly shared rules for behavior and meanings attached to such behavior — (Martin 1992).

Hofstede provides a commonly cited definition of culture:

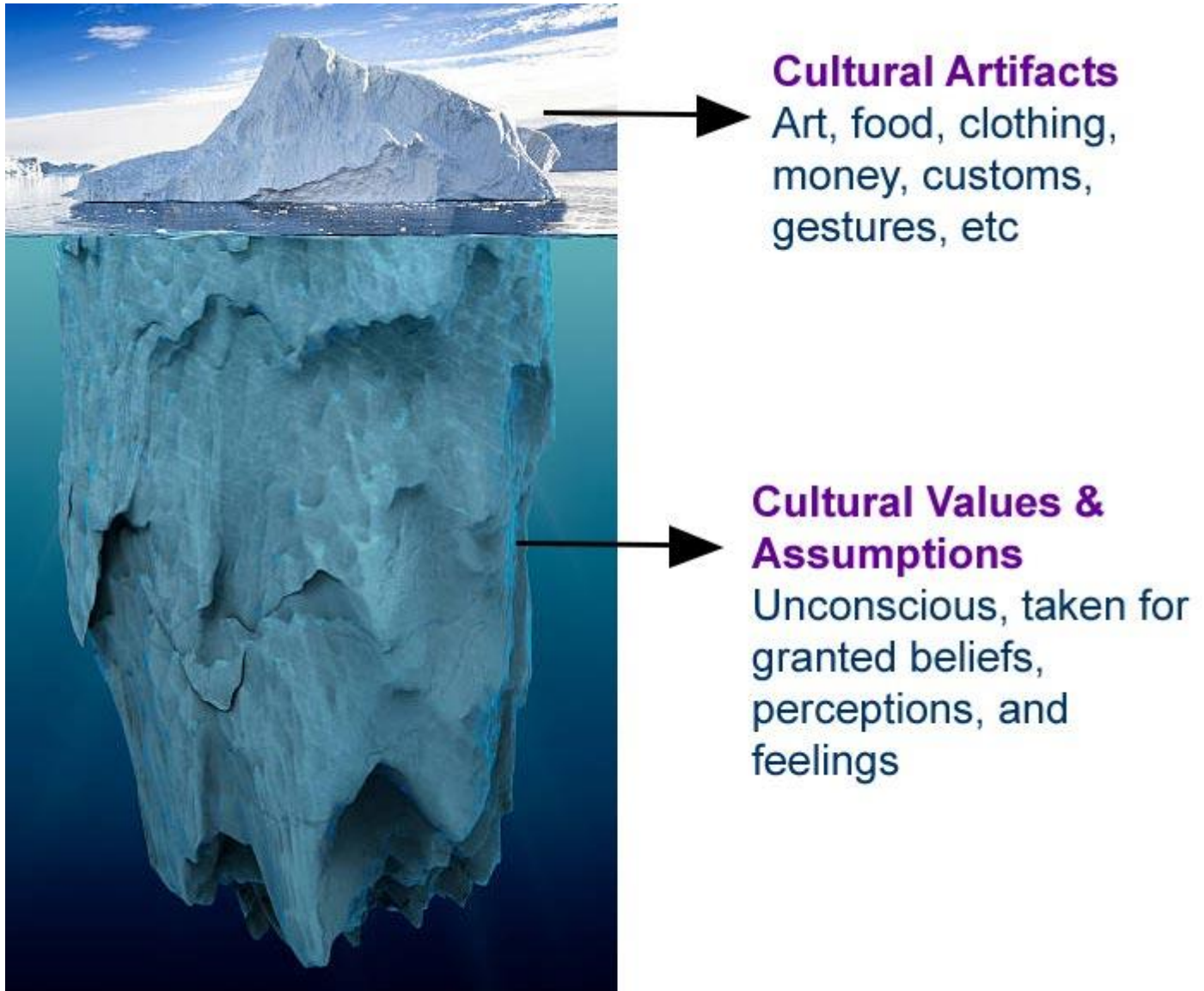
Culture is the “*collective programming of the mind* that distinguishes the members of one group from another. It is the software behind how we operate.”

The Sociologist Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991) described culture as the software that runs the programs of our thoughts, speech, and actions. His view holds that culture is seen as *shared mental programs* that condition individuals' responses to their environment.

This simple definition reckons that culture is prevalent in everyday behavior (individuals' responses to their environment) and that such behavior is controlled by deeply embedded mental programs.

Culture is prevalent everywhere but yet its meaning can be elusive. Several different metaphors are used to try to make the notion of culture more accessible. You noticed in the beginning of this entry how culture is being compared to air to demonstrate culture's invisible but constant presence and influence on everything we do.

Another important [metaphor Opens in new window](#) to help explain culture is the comparison of culture to an iceberg (see a diagram of iceberg below).



picture of an Iceberg

A

Iceberg metaphors are typically used to describe something that is only barely visible, with as much as 90 percent of it being submerged below the waterline. On the surface, we can observe a culture in light of its artifacts.

Artifacts include things such as foods, manners of speaking, eating habits, [gestures Opens in new window](#), music, economic practices, dress, use of physical space (e.g., office setup), order of worship, art, and so on. When many people encounter a new culture, these are the things they are most inclined to talk about because they see them. They're the part of the iceberg that is visible above water.

The invisible part of culture (represented by the unseen part of the iceberg underneath the water) is where the underlying values, assumptions, social structures, perceptions and ways of thinking are housed. These things are rarely seen and talked about.

Characteristics of Culture

There are some basic characteristics that apply to any culture, which are worth keeping in mind.

1. Culture is shared

By definition, culture is something that a group has in common that is not normally available to people outside the group. It is mental programming held in common that enables insiders to interact with each other with a special intimacy denied outsiders.

For example, Scottish people all over the world share an understanding of history that is rooted in conflict with, and oppression by, the English. Even though the two groups nowadays operate relatively harmoniously, this simple fact creates a bond among Scots and an attitude toward the English that is hard put into words but is immediately recognized by Scottish people when they meet anywhere in the world.

2. Culture is learned and is enduring

The example of the Scots and the English tells us that culture does not arise by accident, but builds up systematically over time. The mental programming of a group is learned by its members over long periods as they interact with their environment.

Some aspects of culture are built into institutions, such as religious beliefs, systems of land ownership, forms of marriage, and the like. Others are passed on through the generations in the form of parental role-modeling and advice to the young.

3. Culture is powerful influence on behavior

It is hard for us to escape our culture, even when we want to. The mental programming involved is strong. Even when we mentally question the rationality of some aspects of our culture or seek to adopt cultural flexibility by doing things in line with a different culture, we have a natural tendency to revert to our cultural roots.

For example, one of the authors knew a young man brought up in a strict Christian culture that taught him that the theatre is the house of the Devil. On going to university and mixing with more liberal people, he decided that from a rational point of view there was nothing wrong with going to the theatre. But on his first visit, he became nauseous and had to leave to be sick. His culture had programmed him extremely powerfully.

4. Culture is systematic and organized

Culture is not random. It is an organized system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and meanings that are related to each other and to the context.

5. Culture is largely invisible

What we see of culture is expressed in living facts, which include human behaviors (such as manners of speaking, eating habits, etc.) and activities (such as language, customs, and dress) as well as physical artifacts (such as architecture, art, and decoration).

Because much of culture is hidden, these obvious and visible elements of culture may be likened to the tip of an iceberg. Icebergs have as much as 90 percent of their mass below the surface of the water, leaving only a small percentage visible.

So understanding cultures involves a lot more than just understanding immediate surface behavior such as bows, handshakes, invitations, ceremonies, and body language. the invisible elements of culture—the underlying values, social structures, and ways of thinking—are the most important.

6. Culture may be *tight* or *loose*

Cultures differ from each other not just in their details but also in their pervasiveness. Some societies are characterized by virtually 100 percent agreement as to the form of correct behavior; other societies may have greater diversity and tolerance of difference.

Tight cultures have uniformity and agreement and are often based on homogeneous populations or the dominance of particular religious beliefs. Japan is a good example.

Countries such as Canada with diverse populations have relatively *loose* cultures, which in some cases are made even looser by the encouragement of freedom of thought and action.

Culture is learned through a number of ways including child-rearing practices, peer transmission, and media, and this process is ongoing, with diminishing impact as individuals mature.

Citations

The Concept of Culture:

If you ask 100 anthropologists to define culture, you'll get 100 different definitions. However, most of these definitions would emphasize roughly the same things: that culture is shared, transmitted through learning and helps shape behavior and beliefs. Culture is of concern to all four subfields and while our earliest ancestors relied more on biological adaptation, culture now shapes humanity to a much larger extent.

- One of the earliest definitions of culture was put forth by Tylor in 1871: “Culture, or civilization, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”
- The book defines culture as, “a society’s shared and socially transmitted ideas, values and perceptions, which are used to make sense of experience and generate behavior and are reflected in that behavior (147).”
- Culture is universal among all human groups and even exists among some primates.
- All cultures have to provide for the physical, emotional, and social needs of their members, enculturate new members, resolve conflicts and promote survival for their members.
- Society must balance the needs of the whole with the needs of the individual. If individual needs are continually suppressed, social systems can become unstable and individual stress can become too much to handle. Every culture has its own methods of balancing the needs of society in relation to individual needs.
- **Subcultures** are groups with distinct patterns of learned and shared behavior (ethnicities, races, genders, age categories) within a larger culture. Despite these distinctive traits, members of subcultures still share commonalities with the larger society. Subcultures exist in most state level systems because those systems are pluralistic, they encompass more than one ethnic group or culture.

Characteristics of Culture

Culture has five basic characteristics: It is learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic. All cultures share these basic features.

- Culture is learned. It is **not** biological; we do not inherit it. Much of learning culture is unconscious. We learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. The process of learning culture is known as **enculturation**. While all humans have basic biological needs such as food, sleep, and sex, the way we fulfill those needs varies cross-culturally.
- Culture is shared. Because we share culture with other members of our group, we are able to act in socially appropriate ways as well as predict how others will act. Despite the shared nature of culture, that doesn’t mean that culture is homogenous (the same). The multiple cultural worlds that exist in any society are discussed in detail below.
- Culture is based on symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Symbols vary cross-culturally and are arbitrary. They only have meaning when people in a culture agree on their use. Language, money and art are all symbols. Language is the most important symbolic component of culture.
- Culture is integrated. This is known as holism, or the various parts of a culture being interconnected. All aspects of a culture are related to one another and to truly understand a culture, one must learn about all of its parts, not only a few.
- Culture is dynamic. This simply means that cultures interact and change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. All cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system must adjust.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture

Course Code: HUM-203

Week-2

Relationship Between Language and Culture

By: **Ricky vela** Posted on Fri, 18-10-2019



Culture and language are strongly interconnected. The relationship between them is debatable and several questions pop up in your mind when you try to understand how the language and culture are linked.

Do you know whether culture came first or language? What is the difference between them? Can one of them exist without the other?

For a clear understanding of the relationship between language and culture, it is better to get familiar with their definitions first.

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- [Learn a Foreign Language](#)
- [The Last Word](#)

What is Culture?

[Culture](#) is defined as a blend of thought patterns and characteristics of a group of people.

The word culture is derived from the Latin term colere which means to grow something from the earth so when people interact with each other, they grow together which forms their culture.

Usually, the term culture is defined using external aspects such as [language](#), traditions, religion, arts, and cuisine. But, culture is something deeper than these factors. It refers to the way we think and interacts with those around us.

How You Perceive the Diverse Cultures Existing in the Society is known as Your Cultural Lens

Interestingly, people living in the same society having similar characteristics may have different [cultural](#) views and ideas which depend on several different factors. Thus, it is important to mention that different people living together can have their own ideas and their cultural lens may vary.

What is Language?

Language is the medium of communication using which we express our thoughts and ideas and interact with others.

Tidbit: Over 700 languages are spoken across the globe.

Some of the languages evolved from the others while many languages are traced back thousands of years. However, the origin of the first-spoken human language is still unknown.

“Language is the Roadmap of a Culture”

(Rita Mae Brown)

You might find it surprising to know that the same language spoken in different regions sound a bit different. Yes, dialectical differences exist for many popular languages because of the cultural impact.

For instance, the French spoken in France is different from [Canadian French](#). Likewise, many languages have different regional dialects.

How Culture is Related to Language?

“Changes in Language Often Reflect the Changing Values of a Culture”

(Ravi Zacharias)

Language and culture are interlinked and you cannot learn one of these without having a clear understanding of the other. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica,

language is linked to all the human-life aspects in society, and understanding of the surrounding culture plays an important role in learning a language. Moreover, language allows the organization and evolution of cultural values.

Language is Needed for Effective Expression and Transmission of Culture.

A renowned linguist Ken Hale shares his views on the culture-language relationship. He says that when a language is lost, a part of the culture gets lost as well as Culture is significantly encoded in language.

Culture impacts our core traditions, values, and the way we interact with others in society. On the other hand, language makes those interactions easy. Simply put, language facilitates social interactions while culture helps us to learn how to behave and interact with others.

Language or Culture-Which Came First?

Language is an integral part required for the establishment of culture.

Communication is a basic human need, right? From the start, human beings are communicating and interacting with each other in different ways. Thus, for obvious reasons, the language came first.

Language is the source as well as the essence of a culture.

With time, many languages evolved, and today, a large number of languages are spoken across the world. Do You Know?

Out of over 7000 languages, only [200 languages](#) currently exist in both spoken and written forms while many of the languages are extinct now.

It won't be wrong to say that language complexity increased over time and so did cultural diversity. The languages evolve, primarily because of their association with culture.

Evolution of Language and Culture

Do you know what is common between language and culture? Both are continuously changing!

For instance, the English language that we use today is way different from the old English. Similarly, you can identify several differences between the old western culture and the new one.

Without Culture, no language can exist.

Both language and culture experience drastic changes over time. Therefore, you cannot expect a 10-year-old child and a 70-year-old man to share an identical culture and exact the same language even if they live in the same locality.

How Do Language and Culture Influence Our Personal Identity?

Both language and culture play a significant role in shaping your personality.

Culture tells you how to interact with others and helps to shape values and ethics. Besides, it keeps you close to like-minded people and thus, the sense of belonging strengthens your bond with society.

On the other hand, language is like a tool using which you express your culture. In fact, cultural ideas and beliefs are transmitted ahead via language.

Furthermore, both the culture and language allow us to peek into the past and shape our ideas. How we think, speak and interact with others around us is determined by our cultural values. Likewise, language also impacts human thoughts.

As mentioned earlier, language and culture continue to evolve and so does our personality. As we meet people belonging to different cultures, we get to learn more and explore more, and interaction with them can impact your personality as well.

Paralanguage: The Relationship between Language And Culture

Complex is one term that you can use to describe human communication since paralanguage is used to transmit messages. Paralanguage is specific to a culture, therefore communication with other ethnic groups can lead to misunderstandings.

When you grow up in a specific society, it is inevitable to learn the glances, gestures, and little changes in voice or tone and other communication tools to emphasize or alter what you want to do or say. These specific communication techniques of one culture are learned mostly by imitating and observing people, initially from parents and immediate relatives and later from friends and people outside the close family circle.

Body language, which is also known as *kinesics*, is the most obvious type of paralanguage. These are the postures, expressions, and gestures used as non-verbal language. However, it is likewise possible to alter the meaning of various words by changing the character or tone of the voice.

Homologous Relationship Between Language And Culture

The phrase, *language is culture and culture is language* is often mentioned when language and culture are discussed. It's because the two have a homologous although complex relationship. Language and culture developed together and influenced each other as they evolved. Using this context, Alfred L. Kroeber, a cultural anthropologist from the United States said that culture started when speech was available, and from that beginning, the enrichment of either one led the other to develop further.

If culture is a consequence of the interactions of humans, the acts of communication are their cultural manifestations within a specific community. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, a philosopher from Italy whose work focused on philosophy, semiotics and linguistics said that a speech community is made up of all the messages that were exchanged with one another using a given language, which is understood by the entire society. Rossi-Landi further added that young children learn their language and culture from the society they were born in. In the process of learning, they develop their cognitive abilities as well.

According to Professor Michael Silverstein, who teaches psychology, linguistics and anthropology at the University of Chicago, culture's communicative pressure represents aspects of reality as well as connects different contexts. It means that the use of symbols that represent events, identities, feelings and beliefs is also the method of bringing these things into the current context.

Influencing The Way People Think

The principle of linguistic relativity tells us that language directly influences the way people view the world. Anthropologist-linguist Edward Sapir of the United States said that the language habits of specific groups of people built the real world. He further added that no two languages are similar in such a way that they would represent one society. The world for each society is different. In analysis, this means that speaking a language means that the person is assuming a culture. Knowing another culture, based on this principle, is knowing its particular language. And we need communication to highlight interpretations and representations of that world. This is why the relationship between language and culture is essential when learning any new language.

Inter-Cultural Interactions

What is likely to happen if there is an interaction between two cultures? In today's scenario, intercultural interactions are very common. Communication is necessary for any person who wants to understand and get along with people whose backgrounds and beliefs are greatly dissimilar from their own.

It is easy to use language to mark cultural identity. But we also use language to describe processes and developments, like explaining the intentions of a specific speaker. Specific languages refer to particular cultural groups.

Values, basic assumptions, behavioral conventions, beliefs, and attitudes shared by an ethnic group make up what we call culture. This set of attributes influences the behavior of the individual members of the group and their interpretations of the meanings of the behavior displayed by each member.

It is through language that we express the attributes of culture. We also use language to point out unique objects in our cultures.

All this means that learning and teaching another language is essential for international communication and cooperation. The knowledge of other languages facilitates knowledge of other countries and the specific cultures of each one. Again, this is why the relationship between language and culture is critically important.

Transmission Of Culture And Language

Language is learned, which means it can be culturally transmitted. Pre-school children take on their first language from their exposure to random words they encounter in and out of their homes. When they reach school age, they learn their first language or another language. If it is the [first language](#), the children are taught writing and reading, the correct ways to construct sentences, and how to use formal grammar. However, the child gained initial knowledge about the essential structure and vocabulary of the first language before the child started school.

Conversely, culture is transmitted in a large part, by language, through teaching. Language is the reason why humans have histories that animals do not have. In the study of animal behavior through the course of history, alterations to their behavior were the result of the intervention of humans through domestication and other types of interference.

The culture of humans on the other hand is as different as the world's languages. They are likely to change over time. In industrialized countries, the changes in the language are more rapid.

Language Shapes Culture

Oral instruction, and not imitation, is how we learn the culture. There could be some imitation if the learner is still young. With language, we have a better way to understand methods of social control, products, techniques, and skills. Spoken language offers a vast quantity of usable information for the community. This helps to quicken new skill acquisition and the techniques to adapt to new environments or altered circumstances.

The advent of writing increased the process of cultural dissemination. Diffusing information became much easier thanks to the permanent state of writing. And thanks to the invention of printing and the increase in literacy, this process continues to evolve and speed up.

Modern techniques for fast communication transmission across the globe through broadcasting and the presence of translation services around the world help make usable knowledge to be accessible to people anywhere in the world. Thus, the world benefits from the fast transference, availability, and exchange of social, political, technological, and scientific knowledge.

Assimilation And Social Differentiation, And Language

Through time, variations appeared within a language. Transmission of a language is self-perpetuating unless there is deliberate interference. However, it became important for humans to improve their social hierarchies and social status to advance personally. It's safe to say that many people cultivate their dialect phonologically, grammatically, and lexically to fit into new communities.

An example of this phenomenon is the insistence of immigrants from Europe to speak American English when they decided to move to the United States. It is because they realized that speaking American English is a sign of acceptance in their new home country. Unexpectedly, third-generation immigrants now want to get in touch with the language of their ancestors.

Cultural And Linguistic Diversity

Culture unifies a community although there is diversity within that unity. For example, the older generation's speech might differ from the speech younger people use. Also, different groups speak different languages. This is evident in the differences present in a professor's speech compared to a young admin staff member at the university. People could use a different form of the same language in online forums, which would vastly differ from the language used by media and classically trained individuals.

We use language in different ways. Linguistic varieties fall into geographical, social, and functional subclasses. These factors lead to the formation of dialects that add diversity to the language.

At [Day Translations, Inc.](#), our translators are not only linguistic experts. Because they are native speakers, each of them understands their own culture like the backs of their hands. They inherently understand the nuances of their language as well as the [languages](#) they work with. They apply their deep cultural knowledge to the translation projects they handle because they have a deep understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

Get in touch with our translators day or night, wherever you are. We are open 24/7, all days of the year, to provide you with professional translation service with the highest level of quality and accuracy. For an instant translation quote, send us an email at [Contact us](#) or call us at 1-800-969-6853.

Relationship between Language and Society

The connection between language and society is deeply rooted. Language is used to perform various functions in society and society uses it in the same manner. The inexistence of both will have an impact on one another.

Language is crucial for social interaction in every society regardless of location and period. Language and society have a reciprocal relationship because language shapes society and social interactions shape language. A language is a tool for interaction that humans use to communicate with other humans. Therefore, language cannot be separated from society. Through language, human beings can relate and interact with others and create communication in the community.

The connection between language and society is tightly anchored. The relationship of the two is deeply rooted. Language performs various functions in the society and the society does the same way. If one will not exist, the other one will be affected.

Language is the primary tool for communication purposes, for establishing peace and order in our society, for showing authority and power, and for attaining goals and objectives. But, it can also destruct the society if it will use inappropriately. It must follow the conformity governing the society to avoid conflicts and to meet the boundary of individual differences.

Society however controls our language by giving us preferences as what are acceptable and not, because each one of us has our own perception or point of view. A group of people may accept our language, but for others, it could be kind of offence or insult. We must know how, when and where to say it and for what purpose.

Social changes produce changes in language. This affects values in ways that have not been accurately understood. Language incorporates social values. However, social values are only the same as linguistic values when the society is a stable and unchanging one. Once society starts changing, then language change produces special effects.

Difference between Language and Society

The differences between language and society are as follows:

1. A language is a tool that humans use to communicate with one another whereas society is a community in which people live together.
2. Language is used by human beings to communicate emotions and desires whereas society is an organized group of people.
3. Language consists of symbols, signs, sounds, gestures, and the like whereas society consists of people united through religious beliefs, political views, cultural practices, and the like.
4. Language can exist in the spoken form and the written form whereas society is the aggregate of people who live together in a community.
5. When language influences society, it is referred to as the sociology of language whereas the influence of society on language is known as sociolinguistics.

Language is the main means of human communication and building relations. The first step towards creating a society is through communication. To communicate, a common language is

needed. In the absence of language, human beings cannot relate to and understand each other. Through communication, relationships are built, families are built, and the community grows into a bigger society and nation. Hence, language is essential for society and vice versa.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

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Week-3

Language Variation

Languages Versus Dialects

The number of languages spoken around the world is somewhat difficult to pin down, but we usually see a figure between 6,000 and 7,000. Why are they so hard to count? The term **language** is commonly used to refer to the idealized “standard” of a variety of speech with a name, such as English, Turkish, Swedish, Swahili, or Urdu. One language is usually considered to be incomprehensible to speakers of another one. The word **dialect** is often applied to a subordinate variety of a language and the common assumption is that we can understand someone who speaks another dialect of our own language.

Definition: language

An idealized form of speech, usually referred to as the standard variety.

Definition: dialect

A variety of speech. The term is often applied to a subordinate variety of a language. Speakers of two dialects of the same language do not necessarily always understand each other.

These terms are not really very useful to describe actual language variation. For example, many of the hundreds of “dialects” spoken in China are very different from each other and are not mutually comprehensible to speakers of other Chinese “dialects.” The Chinese government promotes the idea that all of them are simply variants of the “Chinese language” because it helps to promote national solidarity and loyalty among Chinese people to their country and reduce regional factionalism. In contrast, the languages of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are considered separate languages, but actually if a Swede, a Dane, and a Norwegian were to have a conversation together, each could use their own language and understand most of what the others say. Does this make them dialects or languages? The Serbian and Croatian languages are considered by their speakers to be separate languages due to distinct political and religious cultural identities. They even employ different writing systems to emphasize difference, but they are essentially the same and easily understandable to each other.

So in the words of linguist John McWhorter, actually “dialects is all there is.”^[3] What he means by this is that a continuum of language variation is geographically distributed across populations in much the same way that human physical variation is, with the degree of difference between any two varieties increasing across increasing distances. This is the case even across national boundaries. Catalan, the language of northeastern Spain, is closer to the languages of southern France, Provençal and Occitan than any one is to its associated national language, Spanish or French. One language variety blends with the next geographically like the colors of the rainbow. However, the historical influence of colonizing states has affected that natural distribution. Thus, there is no natural “language” with variations called “dialects.” Usually one variety of a language is considered the “standard,” but this choice is based on the social and political prestige of the group that speaks that variety; it has no inherent superiority over the other variants called its “dialects.” The way people speak is an indicator of who they are, where they come from, and what social groups they identify with, as well as what particular situation they find themselves in, and what they want to accomplish with a specific interaction.

How Does Language Variation Develop?

Why do people from different regions in the United States speak so differently? Why do they speak differently from the people of England? A number of factors have influenced the development of English dialects, and they are typical causes of dialect variation in other languages as well.

Settlement patterns: The first English settlers to North America brought their own dialects with them. Settlers from different parts of the British Isles spoke different dialects (they still do), and they tended to cluster together in their new homeland. The present-day dialects typical of people in various areas of the United States, such as New England, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware, still reflect these original settlement sites, although they certainly have changed from their original forms.

Migration routes: After they first settled in the United States, some people migrated further west, establishing dialect boundaries as they traveled and settled in new places.

Geographical factors: Rivers, mountains, lakes and islands affected migration routes and settlement locations, as well as the relative isolation of the settlements. People in the Appalachian mountains and on certain islands off the Atlantic coast were relatively isolated from other speakers for many years and still speak dialects that sound very archaic compared with the mainstream.

Language contact: Interactions with other language groups, such as Native Americans, French, Spanish, Germans, and African-Americans, along paths of migration and settlement resulted in mutual borrowing of vocabulary, pronunciation, and some syntax.

Have you ever heard of “Spanglish”? It is a form of Spanish spoken near the borders of the United States that is characterized by a number of words adopted from English and incorporated into the phonological, morphological and syntactic systems of Spanish. For example, the Spanish sentence *Voy a estacionar mi camioneta*, or “I’m going to park my truck” becomes in Spanglish *Voy a parquar mi troca*. Many other languages have such English-flavored versions, including Franglais and Chinglish. Some countries, especially France, actively try to prevent the incursion of other languages (especially English) into their language, but the effort is always futile. People will use whatever words serve their purposes, even when the “language police” disapprove. Some Franglais words that have invaded in spite of the authorities protestations include the recently acquired *binge-drinking*, *beach*, *e-book*, and *drop-out*, while older ones include *le weekend* and *stop*.

Region and occupation: Rural farming people may continue to use archaic expressions compared with urban people, who have much more contact with contemporary life styles and diverse speech communities.

Social class: Social status differences cut across all regional variations of English. These differences reflect the education and income level of speakers.

Group reference: Other categories of group identity, including ethnicity, national origin of ancestors, age, and gender can be symbolized by the way we speak, indicating in-group versus out-group identity. We talk like other members of our groups, however we define that group, as a means of maintaining social solidarity with other group members. This can include occupational or interest-group jargon, such as medical or computer terms, or surfer talk, as well as pronunciation and syntactic variations. Failure to make linguistic accommodation to those we are speaking to may be interpreted as a kind of symbolic group rejection even if that dialect might be relatively stigmatized as a marker of a disrespected minority group. Most people are able to use more than one style of speech, also called **register**, so that they can adjust depending on who they are interacting with: their family and friends, their boss, a teacher, or other members of the community.

Linguistic processes: New developments that promote the simplification of pronunciation or syntactic changes to clarify meaning can also contribute to language change.

Definition: register

A style of speech that varies depending on who is speaking to whom and in what context.

These factors do not work in isolation. Any language variation is the result of a number of social, historical, and linguistic factors that might affect individual performances collectively and therefore dialect change in a particular speech community is a process that is continual.

Try This

Which of these terms do you use, pop versus soda versus coke? Pail versus bucket? Do you say “vayse” or “vahze” for the vessel you put flowers in? Where are you from? Can you find out where each term or pronunciation is typically used? Can you find other regional differences like these?

What Is a “Standard” Variety of a Language?

The **standard language** is simply one of many variants that has been given special prestige in the community because it is spoken by the people who have the greatest amount of prestige, power, and (usually) wealth. In the case of English its development has been in part the result of the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth-century and the subsequent increase in printed versions of the language. This then stimulated more than a hundred years of deliberate efforts by grammarians to standardize spelling and grammatical rules. Their decisions invariably favored the dialect spoken by the aristocracy. Some of their other decisions were rather arbitrarily determined by standards more appropriate to Latin, or even mathematics. For example, as it is in many other languages, it was typical among the common people of the time (and it still is among the present-day working classes and in casual speech), to use multiple negative particles in a sentence, like “I *don’t* have *no* money.” Those eighteenth-century grammarians said we must use either *don’t* or *no*, but not both, that is, “I don’t have any money” or “I have no money.” They based this on a mathematical rule that says that two negatives make a positive. (When multiplying two signed negative numbers, such as -5 times -2, the result is 10.) These grammarians claimed that if we used the double negative, we would really be saying the positive, or “I have money.” Obviously, anyone who utters that double-negative sentence is not trying to say that they have money, but the rule still applies for standard English to this day.

Definition: standard language

The variant of any language that has been given special prestige in the community.

Non-standard varieties of English, also known as **vernaculars**, are usually distinguished from the standard by their inclusion of such stigmatized forms as multiple negatives, the use of the verb form *ain’t* (which was originally the normal contraction of *am not*, as in “I ain’t,” comparable to “you aren’t,” or “she isn’t”);

pronunciation of words like *this* and *that* as *dis* and *dat*; pronunciation of final “-ing” as “-in;” and any other feature that grammarians have decreed as “improper” English.

Definition: vernaculars

Non-standard varieties of a language, which are usually distinguished from the standard by their inclusion of stigmatized forms.

The standard of any language is a rather artificial, idealized form of language, the language of education. One must learn its rules in school because it is not anyone’s true first language. Everyone speaks a dialect, although some dialects are closer to the standard than others. Those that are regarded with the least prestige and respect in society are associated with the groups of people who have the least amount of social prestige. People with the highest levels of education have greater access to the standard, but even they usually revert to their first dialect as the appropriate register in the context of an informal situation with friends and family. In other words, no language variety is inherently better or worse than any other one. It is due to social attitudes that people label some varieties as “better” or “proper,” and others as “incorrect” or “bad.” Recall Language Universal 3: “All languages are systematic, rule-driven, and equally complex overall, and equally capable of expressing any idea that the speaker wishes to convey.”

In 1972 sociolinguist William Labov did an interesting study in which he looked at the pronunciation of the sound /r/ in the speech of New Yorkers in two different department stores. Many people from that area drop the /r/ sound in words like *fourth* and *floor* (*fawth*, *floah*), but this pronunciation is primarily associated with lower social classes and is not a feature of the approved standard for English, even in New York City. In two different contexts, an upscale store and a discount store, Labov asked customers what floor a certain item could be found on, already knowing it was the fourth floor. He then asked them to repeat their answer, as though he hadn’t heard it correctly. He compared the first with the second answers by the same person, and he compared the answers in the expensive store versus the cheaper store. He found 1) that the responders in the two stores differed overall in their pronunciation of this sound, and 2) that the same person may differ between situations of less and more self-consciousness (first versus second answer). That is, people in the upscale store tended to pronounce the /r/, and responders in both stores tended to produce the standard pronunciation more in their second answers in an effort to sound “higher class.” These results showed that the pronunciation or deletion of /r/ in New York correlates with both social status and context.^[4]

There is nothing inherently better or worse in either pronunciation; it depends entirely on the social norms of the community. The same /r/ deletion that is stigmatized in New York City is the prestigious, standard form in England, used by the upper class and announcers for the BBC. The pronunciation of the /r/ sound in England is stigmatized because it is used by lower-status people in some industrial cities.

It is important to note that almost everyone has access to a number of different language variations and registers. They know that one variety is appropriate to use with some people in some situations, and others should be used with other people or in other situations. The use of several language varieties in a particular interaction is known as **code-switching**.

Definition: code-switching

Using two or more language varieties in a particular interaction.

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Language Change

Processes of Standardization

Standardization is generally thought of as a process that involves four stages. We need not think of them as being chronological. Indeed, the process of standardization is an *ongoing* one, and a whole range of forces are at work.

Selection

Variability is a fact of life for almost all languages. There are different regional dialects, class dialects, and situational varieties. Standardization represents an attempt to curtail, minimize if not eliminate this high degree of variability. The easiest solution seems to be to pick (although not arbitrarily) one of these varieties to be elevated to the status of the standard.

Acceptance

The ‘acceptance’ by the community of the norms of the variety selected over those of rival varieties, through the promotion, spread, establishment and enforcement of the norms. This is done through institutions, agencies, authorities such as schools, ministries, the media, cultural establishments, etc. In fact, the standard language comes to be regarded not just as the best form of the language, but as the language itself (*eg* consider the claim that Mandarin *is* Chinese in Singapore). The other varieties are then dialects, which tend implicitly to get stigmatised as lesser forms, associated with the not too highly regarded people, who are seen as less educated, slovenly, uncouth, etc.

Elaboration

For the variety selected to represent the desired norms, it must be able to discharge a whole range of functions that it may be called upon to discharge, including abstract, intellectual functions. Where it lacks resources to do so, these are developed. Thus a standard language is often characterised as possessing ‘maximal variation in function, minimal variation in form’.

Codification

The norms and rules of grammar, use, etc. Which govern the variety selected have to be formulated, and set down definitively in grammars, dictionaries, spellers, manuals of style, texts, etc.

Definition of pidgin and creole

Right off the bat, it's worth noting that pidgins and creoles are two separate things, even though they may be closely related.

A **pidgin** is a form of language that has typically evolved using simplified grammar and structures from an external language combined with features of local languages. Pidgins are born out of the need for people to communicate without speaking a common language.

Whereas:

A **creole** is a language that has evolved from contact between a European language (e.g., French, English, or Portuguese) and a local language (or a variety of local languages). Most creoles emerged during the slave trade and are most commonly associated with the West Indies and Africa. There are also many English-based creoles in South and Southeast Asia.

Some common examples of Creoles include:

- Haitian creole - French-based
- Jamaican Patois - English-based
- Reunionese - French-based

Difference between pidgin and creole

As demonstrated by the above definitions, pidgins and creoles do share some characteristics. However, they are their own distinct entities and therefore have differences.

The main differences between pidgins and creoles include:

- Pidgins are not spoken as a native language by any country, whereas many countries have creoles that are native languages.
- Pidgins have very basic grammar, whereas creoles have much more complex and full grammar.
- Pidgins tend to have limited vocabularies, whereas creoles are much more extended.
- Pidgins are considered reduced forms of other languages, whereas creoles have developed into fully-fledged languages of their own.

As we continue to move through this article, you'll get a better sense of the distinctions between pidgins and creoles, and we'll also look at some examples of each.

Characteristics of pidgins and creoles

We've already looked at some differences between pidgins and creoles, but here are the main defining characteristics of each type of language:

Characteristics of pidgins

- Generally have limited vocabulary
- Simplified grammar

- Use many onomatopoeias (words that sound like the thing they are referring to, e.g., 'bang', 'slap', 'woosh', 'sizzle')
- Consonant clusters often get simplified (e.g., instead of pronouncing all the sounds in the phrase 'best player', the pidgin pronunciation might be 'bes player' where the /t/ is dropped from the '-st' consonant cluster)
- Not typically a native language of any country, but spoken as a second language
- Commonly seen as being low **prestige** language varieties
- Simplified sentence and phrase structures
- Linguistic characteristics such as gender and number (singular and plural forms) are often non-existent.

Characteristics of Creoles

- Fully developed grammar
- Extensive vocabulary
- Full, native languages that have derived from pidgins
- Most commonly viewed as vernacular languages, although in countries where they are widely used, they are viewed as having higher **prestige**
- Most creoles are born of contact between European and native languages, and creoles might include some words and structures from European languages (such as French and Portuguese). That said, not all creoles are based on European languages. For example, Betawi is a Malay-based creole with no European influence.

Pidgin and creole examples

Remember, pidgin and creole are types of language that develop as a means of communication between groups who do not share a common language. As such, there are many examples throughout history that have been recorded or noted.

Examples of Pidgin languages include:

- **Madras Bashai** - a **dialect** of Tamil with influences from Indian English, Telugu, Malayalam, Burmese, and Hindustani, spoken in the region of Chennai (India).
- **Algonquian-Basque Pidgin** – a Basque-based pidgin with influences from the indigenous language, Algonquian, used by Basque whalers and Algonquin communities in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence (Canada) up to the 1710s.
- **Settla Swahili** – a pidgin derived from English with Swahili influences, used by English-speaking European colonists to communicate with Swahili people in Kenya and Zambia.
- **Labrador-Inuit Pidgin French** – a French-based pidgin with influences from Breton, Basque, and local Inuit languages, spoken in Labrador (Canada) until the 1760s as a means of communication between the two groups.

Examples of Creole languages include:

- **Bungi Creole** – developed from pidgins of Scottish English, Scottish Gaelic, French, Norn, Cree, and Ojibwe. Bungi Creole is spoken in what is now known as Manitoba, Canada.

- **Michif** - based on a combination of Cree and Métis French with influences from English and neighbouring Indigenous languages, spoken by the Métis people in various Canadian provinces including Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.
- **Kituba** - National language in the Democratic Republic of Congo, based on a Bantu language called Kikongo.
- **Haitian Creole** – widely spoken as a first language in Haiti, largely based on French with influences from Portuguese, Spanish, English, Taino, and West African languages.

What are Dialects?

The definition of a **dialect** is a form of any language spoken by a specific group of people. For example, all English speakers speak the English language, but there are several dialects among different regions and groups. Within English, there is standard English, Southern English, African American Vernacular English, Appalachian English, British English, and so on.

Regional Dialect

A **regional dialect** is a dialect spoken by the people in a specific region of a country or continent. Regional dialects are often influenced by the environment, technology, and contact with speakers of other languages. For example, in Southern Louisiana, many people speak Louisiana French (otherwise known as Cajun French). This started in the 17th century, and over time as French immigrants and native-born Louisianans lived in close proximity, their languages influenced each other and Louisiana French was the dialect that resulted. Another example of a regional dialect is Southern American English, which is spoken by many people living in the United States' Southeast region. Someone from the Southeast part of the United States might greet you by saying, "howdy."

What is an example of a dialect?

An example of a dialect is Southern American English. This is what is known as a regional dialect as many people who live in Southeastern United States use Southern American English.

What is a dialect in literature?

A dialect is a subgroup or a specific form of a language. Authors will often include this in literature through writing characters' dialogues in certain dialects. This provides depth and context for the characters.

Code-Switching

Alternating between two or more languages or language varieties/dialects in the context of a single conversation. Using elements of more than one language when conversing in a manner that is consistent with the syntax, morphology, and phonology of each language or dialect.

Code-Mixing

Truth be told, many people use the terms Code-Switching and Code-Mixing interchangeably. Some linguists, however, make a distinction in which Code Mixing refers to the hybridization of two languages (e.g. *parkear*, which uses an English root word and Spanish morphology) and Code-Switching refers to the movement from one language to another.

Many pairs of languages have a hybrid name. Some languages hybridized with English include Spanglish for Spanish, Hindlish for Hindi, and Frenglish for French.

Code-Meshing

Code meshing is an instructional approach that invites multiple languages and language varieties within the classroom.

The idea behind this approach is that students who speak other languages and language varieties should be encouraged to share those in the classroom and not be made to feel that their home language or dialect is any less valuable than any other dialect or language. Classrooms that accept only the dominant forms of English as “correct” and “appropriate” can discourage students from diverse backgrounds from participating. Dr. Brandy Gatlin-Nash introduced us to the term Code-Meshing at the Bilingualism-SLP Impact Virtual Conference on Building Equity for Diverse Learners in Special Education. She discussed the importance of encouraging students to use their home dialects in their classroom writings and then using the students’ work to teach them to be bidialectal. It allows students to reveal and express their perspectives in a personal way. Through the use of code-meshing, teachers are enabled to respect the diversity of the students in their classrooms.

What is an example of code mixing?

For more on code-meshing, see [Mesh It, Y’all: Promoting Code-Meshing Through Writing Center Workshops](#) and [Creating Conversation: Code-Meshing as a Rhetorical Choice](#).

Translanguaging

Translanguaging is another term occasionally used to describe the use of two languages.

A few years ago I was asked by a school district SLP what the deal is with this new term “translanguaging.” She said, “I just don’t see how this is any different than code-switching and code-mixing.”

So, what exactly is translanguaging? Well, when a child uses translanguaging, he or she uses any and all of his language knowledge, structures, etcetera, to communicate. So when we use a dual-language approach in our assessments, we are allowing for translanguaging. Or, more easily stated, we let kids use both (or all) of their languages/language varieties to accomplish tasks.

I read a [blog post by Francois Grosjean](#), (you know, the guy who shared with us in the 80s that a bilingual is not two monolinguals in one), who says that translanguaging is the same behavior as “interacting with other bilinguals, changing language base freely, translating whenever needed, and intermingling one’s languages in the form of codeswitching and borrowing.” He interviewed one of the term’s most visible proponents, Ofelia Garcia, and asked her what the difference is, and what the benefit is in replacing the terms. She stated that it may look the same from the outside but the difference is that those earlier terms are an external view of language while “translanguaging takes the internal perspective of speakers whose own mental grammar has been developed in social interaction with others.” In a nutshell, it is allowing the use of any language content and construction for expression.

Why do people use Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Code-Meshing?

There are many reasons that people who are exposed to more than one language or language variety use code-switching and code-mixing.

Sometimes Ideas are Better Expressed in One Language than Another

Sometimes ideas are better expressed in one language than another for people. This can be due to having the vocabulary in one language but not the other. It can also be that the idea is culturally bound. An example that a friend who spent a lot of time in Bolivia shared was *pay de manzana*, which translates literally to apple pie but *pay de manzana* in Bolivia was very different for her than apple pie in New York, so when she was describing her Bolivian experience, she used *pay de manzana*.

This connection between culture and food is also illustrated in research studies. Peña and colleagues (2002) asked elementary school students to name all of the foods they could think of. They asked students the same question in different languages on different days. What was so cool about this study is that the students gave roughly the same number of items when asked in Spanish and English but they didn’t give the SAME items. In English, the top items included hamburgers, hot dogs, and French fries. In Spanish some of the top items included tacos, frijoles (beans) and caldo (soup). This shows how closely tied together language and culture are. It’s not just a different set of words for saying the same thing, it’s a different mode used in different situations.

University of Global Village (UGV)

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Language and Politics

This article will examine the relationship between language and politics, look at typical language techniques politicians use, such as political rhetoric, and provide an example of how to analyse a political speech.

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Relationship Between Language and Politics

The relationship between language and politics falls within the study of [language and power](#), which recognises how others can use language to make us act, feel, or think in certain ways without force.

According to Wareing (1991), there are two main types of power; **instrumental** and **influential**.¹

- **Instrumental power** = authoritative power, e.g., the Queen has authoritative power over the United Kingdom; she doesn't need to convince anyone of her power.
- **Influential power** = When individuals or organisations try to gain power over others by influencing their thoughts and behaviours. E.g. advertising companies try to gain power over people's buying habits by influencing their thoughts.

Politics can be considered both instrumental and influential power. However, when looking at individual or small groups of politicians and their language use (e.g. giving speeches), we usually consider this a type of influential power. This is because, although we are expected to abide by the laws politicians set, we have a choice over who we vote for and which policies.

Politicians, therefore, utilise language in such a way to gain more influential power for themselves and their affiliated parties.

Let's take a look at some times and places when politicians may use the English language to gain power and some common techniques used.

Politics and the English language

One of the most common places we see politicians using language techniques is in **speeches**. Speeches are often persuasive and engaging spoken texts used to influence and persuade the masses into voting a certain way or adopting certain political and societal values.

Politicians may also utilise language to gain influential power when making public appearances, such as appearing on the TV (e.g. the News), when talking to journalists, and when answering members of the public's questions.

A final consideration is the concept of **parliamentary speech**, the language politicians use when talking to each other. The use of parliamentary speech falls within the category of [pragmatics](#). We will cover this in full detail later.

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Politics and language techniques

Now we have a good idea of the relationship between language, politics, and power, and when politicians may utilise language to gain influential power. Let's look at some well-known language techniques used to influence others.

When analysing political speeches and politician's use of the English language, we can look out for the following language techniques:

- Political rhetoric
- [Pragmatics](#)
- Forms of address
- Political spin

Let's look at these in more detail.

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Political rhetoric

Political rhetoric is the name given to the frequent **persuasive language** techniques used by politicians. The term *rhetoric* is used to describe the art of persuasive speaking or writing and comes from the Greek *rhetor*, meaning 'professional speaker'.

Common features of political rhetoric with examples are laid out in the table below:

Features of political rhetoric	Examples
Alliteration	' <i>Veni, Vidi, Vici</i> ' - Julius Caesar
Allusion (referring to something without explicitly mentioning it)	' <i>Ask not just what our government can do for us, but what we can do for ourselves</i> ' - Barack Obama (Alludes to J. F. Kennedy's inaugural address)
Rhetorical questions with suggested answers	' <i>Where are the 9 million more jobs that President Obama promised his stimulus would have created by now? They are in China, Mexico, and Canada [...]</i> ' - Mitt Romney
Lists of three	' <i>Education, education, education</i> ' - Tony Blair
Metaphors and extended metaphors	Common metaphors in politics include comparing: <i>Politics to war</i> <i>The economy to a building</i> <i>Nations to people</i>

Repetition	<i>'We will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again.'</i> - Donald Trump
<u>Imperatives</u>	<i>'Get Brexit done'</i> - British Conservative Party
Flattery	<i>'And might I say you're all looking rather lovely this evening...'</i> - Boris Johnson
Emotive language	<i>'Do not the British people deserve a Prime Minister they can trust, not a Government who are mired in sleaze, cronyism and scandal?'</i> - Kier Starmer
<u>Hyperbole</u>	<i>'So first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.'</i> - Franklin Delano Roosevelt
<u>Tautology</u> (Saying the same thing twice)	<i>'It is what it is'</i> - Donald Trump
Prevarication (avoiding the question)	<i>'I'm not interested in that. I'll tell you what I am interested in...'</i>

The Power of Language: Exploring the Role of Language in Politics

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a powerful tool in political discourse and it is a powerful tool for persuasion and manipulation in politics. Political leaders use language to convey their messages, shape public opinion, and mobilize support for their agendas. Rhetoric, speeches, and propaganda are all examples of how language is used in politics to influence and persuade. Politicians use language strategically to frame issues, shape narratives, and sway public opinion. The choice of words, tone, and rhetoric can influence how policies are perceived and debated. Political parties often use specific language and slogans to differentiate themselves from their opponents and appeal to their base.

Likewise, understood rhetoric to be a powerful political weapon for shaping political belief and action. Indeed, it was the art of rhetoric that enabled people to live and engage in civilized communal life (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Identification of the gap in understanding the role of language in politics. Importance of studying language as a political tool in shaping public opinion and behavior. This study analyze the rhetoric strategies employed by political leaders and parties to convey their ideologies and agendas. It examine the impact of political language on public perception, attitudes, and behavior. It identify the linguistic features which could be found the speeches of politicians.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the role and importance of language in politics and in public diplomacy.
2. To determine the impact of political language on public perception, attitudes, and behavior.
3. To describe and explain the usage of linguistic features in political speeches.

Research Questions

1. How the language plays an important role in politics?
2. Which tools of language do politicians use for persuasion?
3. What are the linguistic features found in the speeches of politicians?

Significance of the study

This study investigates the relation of language and politics. It determine the role of language in politics and diplomacy. This study is significant in the sense that it provides sociolinguistic awareness not only to the researchers but also the lecturers and students to develop their understanding about the role of language in politics and to know the linguistic features used in political discourse. The results offered in this paper will provide useful information for future research into numerous areas of the language. In addition to this, the data collected will also help the readers to improve academically. Finally, this study is a good contribution in the fields of linguistics as it would help to understand the intricate and multifaceted relationship between language and politics.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the role of language in politics. This paper systematically reviews related research on the relation of language and politics. To get useful results, the author relied on secondary data. The data was collected from a variety of reliable sources, including publications, articles, reviews, and previous research investigations to gather relevant studies concerning the role of language in politics by using “language & politics” as the key words for related literature. The findings are based on the most current and reliable data available. The study covers a variety of literature and research perspectives on the issue to establish the usefulness of language in politics and public diplomacy. Secondary research makes use of not only a massive quantity of data but also data that has been collected carefully. Researchers use secondary data, which allows them to deal with massive data sets that have already been compiled by others. As a result, this study shed light on many different aspects of the language in political discourse.

FINDINGS

The entire research findings of the study have been reviewed from various journals, research papers, articles, etc. The results of this paper show that Language plays a crucial role in politics. It described that language has multifaceted role in politics, it emphasized that political actors use language differently to persuade, manipulate, and mobilize citizens. By exploring dimensions of political language, this study looks forward to understanding the relation between language and politics.

The relation of language and politics

The relationship of language and politics in history dates back to the Greek polis, where the Aristotelian concept of *bios politikos* first emerged. He meant by the *bios politikos* that it transcends the necessities of labor and work; it is the life of one who has freely chosen to devote oneself to the polis. The bond between language and politics is derivable from the association of language and communication. The function of language in politics lies in the fact that every political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled, and influenced by it (Schaffer, 1996). The study of the language of politics is important in order to know how language is utilized by those who desire to gain, exercise, and keep power (Beard, 2000). Language is used in politics to make speeches and remarks. Thus, political career is negotiated, secured and practiced through the instrumentality of language whose product, in this wise is mainly speech making. Beard (ibid: 35) further adds that “making speeches is a vital part of the politicians’ role in announcing policies and persuading people”.

As Lakoff (1990:7) appropriately shows, “language is politics, politics assigns power, and power governs how people talk and how they are understood.” He goes ahead to show that political manipulations depend on language since it initiates and interprets power relations. As such, the roles that language bestows upon its users confer power and explain relationships among them. Power manifests itself in the use of language: every user of language “plays the linguistic power game according to hidden agendas, the unsaid being far more potent than the said” (Ibid: 21).

Opeibi (2009) puts it that language is the vehicle of politics in that it offers room to politicians to explore its verbal communicative resources, and the manipulative abilities of words in fitting their intentions. Language is a channel through which a candidate’s manifesto, superior political thoughts, and party ideologies are expressed. Most importantly, language provides a tool for translating these into social actions, bringing about the much-needed social change and continuity in society. Thus, the role of language in convincing, mobilizing, persuading, and enlightening the citizenry cannot be overstated. It is a passport to the heart of the people. For Akinkurolere (2011), citizens’ support for politicians rests on the message these politicians deliver, along with the manner in which it is presented, as these determine the success of candidacy, programs, or policies. As such, both the political message and its manner of presentation are crucial.

Chilton and Schaffner (1997) argue that politics cannot work without language, and the use of language in forming social groups leads to what we broadly define as ‘politics’ (206). Pelinka (2007) further highlights that the study of language goes beyond literature and linguistics, suggesting that language should be viewed and analyzed as a political phenomenon. He also contends that politics should be conceived and studied as a discursive phenomenon (129).

In the context of making certain terminological distinctions between the notions *language* and *politics*, this inquiry views them considering the definitions offered by Chilton.

Thus, the scholar states that *language* is ‘the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate, while by *politics* he means ‘the art of governance’. Thus, this inquiry views the language as an instrument to interact or transact in various situations and/or in different organizations being conventionally recognized as political environment (Chilton, 1998).

Language as a political tool

Language, as a dynamic mode of communication is therefore seen as instrumental in molding political discourse in the sense that it actually fashions and remodels both public opinion and, therefore, the structure of politics in a nation. The words that flow out of the mouth of political leaders, their narrative construction, and rhetoric devices are critical determinants of the directions that policy might follow and even public perception. On Hudson’s (1978) argument, language is a resource from which potential politicians derive power or even maintain power in a strategic way.

The Influence of Political Speeches (Emotive language)

The persuasive power of political talk depends on the skillful use of language. Politicians with many language tools can effectively claim political power and authority. In democratic societies, political power is mainly gained and kept through persuasive language. Words are tools and weapons that evoke emotions. They have great power to express feelings that cause various reactions in the reader or listener. They also show the feelings and attitudes of the writer or speaker.

Thus, Cuddon (1998: 257) views emotive language as a “language intended to express or arouse emotional reactions towards the subject matter or the addressee”; it is distinguished with referential (or scientific) language that is used to denote exclusively. In addition, according to Lopez (2000: 19), emotive language is the use of descriptive words which color or dramatize speaking or writing. It makes the content more interesting and may also reveal bias. Finally, Lum (2001: 23) adds that emotive language “sways the emotions of the audience either for or against the view presented.”

Words are important for politics. The speeches and writings of politicians, like presidents and prime ministers, have big and lasting impacts. These impacts are worth serious study. Politicians aim to be good at speaking and writing to gain an edge over their rivals. They skillfully use emotive language, often with a positive spin, to persuade most of their audience and motivate them to act (Macagno & Walton, 2014: 4).

One of the important highlights during the inauguration ceremony of a newly elected president is the speech delivery. The inaugural speech comes with fanfare, jubilation, and renewed hope that indeed there is a bright future ahead. Speeches by sitting presidents are always unique in many ways. Though it is a political speech, it is given after the end of an interval of several years, most often four. It has national and international implications with its listeners across the borders. An inaugural speech is a victory speech; it marks the success of the incoming President and compels the opposition party or parties to accept and submit to the new leadership. This represents the linguistic commencement and legislation of a new socio-political and ideological era.

Language and Diplomacy

Nick (2001: 39) posits that it is possible to give various definitions to the term “language in diplomacy”. It could be the speech used by a nation, a tribe, or a large group of people. Additionally, it could be understood as a certain way for expressing the needs of the diplomatic profession: certain ways or

methods of expressions, forms, styles, manners, or tones. In any of these senses, the use of language in diplomacy is very important. However, there is a problem that most diplomats do not manage to communicate in a single language, common for all participants. Considering these differences, diplomacy can be defined as the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of groups or states and enhancing international relations regarding issues of peace-making, trade, war, economics, and culture. The ability to conduct diplomacy is one of the very features that distinguish the different states from each other. The practice of diplomacy dates back to the existence of the first city-states.

An important aspect of diplomatic negotiation is the language or the strategic means of communicative interactions. The use of language in diplomacy is crucial, as it is not merely a tool for transmitting thoughts or a communication instrument, but often the very essence of the diplomatic vocation. This has been true since the early beginnings of the profession. For this reason, from ancient times, the first envoys of the Egyptian pharaohs, Roman legates, and medieval Dubrovnik consuls had to be educated and trained individuals who were well-spoken and multilingual.

Thus, the language of political and diplomatic communication has its own rules, norms, cultural pragmatics, and stylistic patterns, which cannot be strictly defined within a structural language framework. Therefore, in modern linguistics, it is rational to employ new methods of linguo-cognitive orientation that study the mechanisms of worldview and understanding of individuals through language.

Diplomatic language is a functional and international language of politics, distinct from the rich, journalistic, and free literary language. It is concise, precise, and classically simple, characterized not only by accurate evidence but also by deeper analysis and summaries of government policies and actions. The diplomat's primary weapon is their language; they often speak extensively and vividly while providing limited information. In many cases, diplomacy is synonymous with negotiations, involving the conduct of international relations through discussions, ambassadors, and representatives to settle various conflicting interests (Ismailova et al., 2020).

The present era is characterized by globalization, leading to the continuous expansion of international relations. As countries increasingly interact on a single platform, effective communication with appropriate language use becomes vital. Proper communication is essential to establish and strengthen international relations (Xhemaili, 2022).

In public diplomacy, selecting the appropriate words is crucial. Words are the building blocks of phrases, and each sentence should convey a clear idea. To ensure clarity, especially when using a language one does not fully master, it is preferable to use short, concise, and straightforward sentences. In this context, English is the most widely used diplomatic language, being the first choice for both public and legal affairs, according to Lin (2019).

The role of language in political movements and revolutions

Since the separation of India and Pakistan in 1947, there have been constant political tensions between the eastern and western regions of Pakistan. These tensions intensified regarding the language question immediately after Pakistan's establishment. Although the language movement began in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to establish Bengali (Bangla) as the state language of

Pakistan, there was also controversy within East Pakistan about granting Bengali official language status. The people of East Pakistan had long used Urdu as a sacred language, and it was the language of the wealthy and educated. Consequently, some academics and politicians advocated for retaining Urdu as the medium for education, official activities, and socio-cultural functions, including religion and entertainment. Notably, Urdu was also the language of prominent East Bengal politicians and influential leaders such as Mohammad Akram, Maulana Moniruzzaman, and Maulana Azad (Ahmed, 2013).

However, most of the people in eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh) participated in various socio-cultural movements, including the Swadeshi movement. The Swadeshi movement (1906) bolstered the spirit of the Bengali language in East Bengal (then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh). During that period, Bengali served as a unifying force between West Bengal (now India) and East Bengal, fostering awareness of Bengali culture, language, and literature. The remnants and effects of the Swadeshi movement persisted among the people in parts of Bangladesh even after the formation of Pakistan in 1947.

The language movement in East Pakistan began after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the first Governor-General of Pakistan, proposed Urdu as the state language of Pakistan in a speech in Dhaka in 1948. His speech sparked protests from some segments of the city-centric cultural movement in eastern Pakistan. When a cultural movement formed to establish Bengali as the state language of Pakistan, East Pakistani politicians began to use the language movement as a political weapon against the central government. Consequently, the language movement transitioned from being a cultural initiative to a political movement dominated by politicians.

The language movement, which began as a pseudo-movement with political intentions, led to political issues and movements but did not significantly contribute to the development of the Bengali language. As a result, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) played no substantial role in the advancement of Bengali language and literature. Therefore, it can be argued that the language movement in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was primarily a political movement, where the development, propagation, and reproduction of the Bengali language were not prioritized.

It is important to note that the first seeds of the East Pakistan independence movement were sown through the language movement. The debate on language issues continued even after 1971, when Bangladesh became an independent state. However, Article 3 of the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) clearly states that Bangla is the state language of the republic, promoting Bengali solely as the national language (Abdul Awal, 2022).

Language has always been a political issue, sometimes even violently so. In 1948, Pakistan declared Urdu as its sole national language, resulting in mass discontent, especially among the Bengali-speaking majority of East Bengal. Rising tensions led to a ban on public protests, which was defied in 1952 by students and language activists in Dhaka. The police opened fire on the protesters, killing dozens. The date, 21 February, is now commemorated as International Mother Language Day, established by UNESCO to honor global linguistic diversity and the rights of native speakers.

The role of language in nationalist movements is also well exemplified by the Irish independence movement. During the campaign, Irish Gaelic played a significant role in mobilizing the people and

was actively encouraged. However, once independence was achieved, the use of Irish Gaelic significantly declined and nearly became extinct (Iwamoto, 2005).

The role of language in nation building

Language, being deeply intertwined with the culture and history of a community, is used by people to identify themselves within their community and differentiate themselves from others through social interactions in that language. As Kramsch (2009, p. 3) stated, “People view their language as a symbol of their social identity.” Tong & Cheung (2011) asserted that language reflects the lifestyle and carries the social and cultural identities of native speakers in a particular geographical region. Therefore, to construct national identities and promote nationalism, it is important to use a common language to integrate a population into a nation within a state. Language is a powerful tool for uniting individuals into a single community with a common identity, serving as a significant symbolic marker of an individual’s or group’s identity (Kaur & Shapii, 2018, p. 2).

This effort becomes imperative in states with multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual contexts, such as India, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. Language policy and planning are crucial for newly independent nation-states like Pakistan, to adopt a national and official language that supports the development of the nation-state and socio-economic equality within its population. After independence, nations often use a shared common language as a symbolic marker to integrate their diverse population into a single unified nation. Language thus becomes central in the processes of nationalism and nation-building, and in culture in general, leading to the politicization of language policy and planning. Since the inception of Pakistan, Urdu has been represented as its national language, while English is regarded as the official language of the state (Shah & Pathan, 2016).

Turkish had been the official language since 1876 when the first constitution was declared in the Ottoman Empire. During the nation-building process, speaking Turkish became not only a legal requirement but also a crucial precondition for being considered a member of the Turkish nationality. This sentiment is reflected in the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish nation-state: “One who regards himself as a member of the Turkish nation should first of all and in every case, speak Turkish. If someone who does not speak Turkish claims membership in Turkish culture and community, it would not be right to believe in this” (Şeker, 2005).

Japan is unique in that it refers to its language as *kokugo* (national language) rather than *nihongo* (Japanese). *Kokugo* is deliberately ambiguous, serving to blur the distinction between language and national authority (Tanaka, 1992: 201-202). It is widely believed in Japan that there is no difference between the national language and the official language. However, Japan is not “monolithic” in terms of language. There are many dialects and registers, as well as a gap between the centralized official language (whether written or spoken) and ordinary speech, similar to other countries. Despite this, the term *kokugo* has the effect of masking these contradictions and presenting the national language as a single, unified system.

Common linguistic features to be found in political speeches

Modern linguistics, using a cognitive-discursive approach, increasingly focuses on the discursive features of language, particularly political discourse, due to its predominantly discursive nature (Hager & Hilbig, 2020). Political discourse is characterized by its communication purpose, participants, and

methods, including strategies and tactics (Degani, 2018; Markowitz & Slovic, 2020; Scotto Di Carlo, 2020). While linguists and sociolinguists have traditionally led this research, political scientists have also contributed significantly by exploring language's role in political science (Dallmayr, 1984), national identity (Bugarski, 2004), international negotiations (Bell, 1988), and social mobilization (Pelinka, 2007). Politics, like all spheres of social activity, has its own **code**, a term used by linguists to refer to a language variety particular to a specific group.

Personal pronouns in political discourse

Politicians strategically use pronouns for several key reasons (Gastil, 1992; Wilson, 1990). Firstly, pronouns reflect their ideological views; for example, they might use “us” or “it” to describe the government, depending on their stance on public governance. Secondly, pronouns indicate the speaker's closeness to the topic or participants. For instance, Margaret Thatcher skillfully used “I” to establish rapport and “we” to align with supporters and distance herself from opponents (Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990). Thirdly, using “we” can involve listeners in the argument, making them more receptive. Fourthly, pronouns can assign responsibility differently; for example, using “it,” “I,” or “we” in similar sentences distributes responsibility in varying ways (Wilson, 1990). Additionally, pronouns can be used for vagueness or precision, helping politicians avoid direct answers in difficult interviews (Bull & Fetzer, 2006). The pronoun “we” also helps establish social groups and identities (Helmbrecht, 2002). Lakoff (1990) noted that pronouns work subtly, with Reagan's ambiguous use of “we” creating both unity and separation among Americans by using inclusive “we” for solidarity and exclusive “we” to represent his administration.

Rhetorical devices in political speeches

Rhetoric is the art of effective or persuasive speaking and writing. It involves using language skillfully to convince, influence, or engage an audience. The studies reported in this section are concerned with the way in which politicians employ rhetorical devices to invite audience applause in political speeches. In this context, especially of politicians at election campaign rallies, audience reactions such as clapping and booing provide an important barometer of their popular appeal; hence, politicians are often aware of the value of using rhetorical devices in evoking applause to elicit agreement from their audience. As such, applause can be interpreted as a highly noticeable expression of group identity or solidarity with the speaker and the party the speaker represents. In this respect, applause would seem to play a substantial role in the development of a politician's image and career as a popular figure.

To address this issue, a follow-up study was conducted by Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) with more comprehensive sampling of political speeches. They analyzed all the 476 speeches that were televised from the 1981 British party political conferences (Conservative, Labor and Liberal parties). They examined seven basic rhetorical formats (contrasts, lists, puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, combinations, position taking, and pursuits). Their results showed that nearly 70 per cent of all the collective applause was associated with these seven rhetorical devices. In particular, contrasts and lists were by far the most effective: contrasts were associated with around 33.2 per cent of the incidences of collective applause during speeches, lists with 12.6 per cent. In short, nearly half the collective applause was related to the two rhetorical formats originally identified by Atkinson.

According to Atkinson (e.g., 1983), there are two rhetorical devices which are widely employed to invite audience applause in political speeches: three-part lists and contrasts.

Metaphor in political communication

Metaphor refers to when a word or a phrase is used which establishes a comparison between one idea and another. When a politician is said to 'take flak' from an opponent, politics is being compared to warfare, with the politician metaphorically being shot at. On the other hand, it may be the politician who is 'on the offensive, targeting' his opponents by 'launching an attack' on their policies. Two common sources of metaphor in politics are sport and war, both of which involve physical contests of some sort. Both politicians themselves, and those who report politics, use these metaphors.

Metaphor, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 159), plays a central role in the formation of social and political reality. From a cognitive point of view, metaphor is, they argued, a conceptual system in which one kind of experience can be comprehended in terms of another. For example, one conceptual metaphor is HAPPY IS UP (ibid. p. 15). They also, argue that metaphors are important for understanding complex ideas. For example, the metaphor "HAPPY IS UP" helps us understand the feeling of happiness by comparing it to the physical direction "up" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 15). In this metaphor, "up" is the source domain (a concrete idea), and "happy" is the target domain (an abstract idea). The way we use "up" to describe "happy" is called a mapping. Kövecses (2002) adds that domains are our mental concepts or images about different experiences, like "BUILDING" or "MOTION." These mental concepts help us understand and use metaphors more effectively.

When Blair's supporters in 1997 wanted to suggest that if he won, his government would act promptly on issues, they used a metaphor taken from warfare and promised to 'hit the ground running'. This phrase originates in the idea of soldiers leaping from combat helicopters and running straight into action. After Ronald Reagan's poor showing in a televised debate in 1984, his supporters promised a campaign of 'damage control'. The word 'campaign' is itself a reference to battle, and in campaigns 'political battles are won', 'leads are surrendered'.

Metonymy in political discourse

Metonymy involves replacing the name of something with something that is connected to it, without being the whole thing. For example, the President of the United States, his government and advisors, are sometimes replaced by the much simpler term 'The White House', which is the presidential residence and administrative center. Similarly, when an announcement is made by a member of the British royal family, it is often described as follows: 'Buckingham Palace today denied claims that the royal family is out of touch with the people.' In other words the building where they live – Buckingham Palace – replaces the name of the people who live there – the royal family. The above announcement without use of metonymy would read 'The royal family today denied claims that they are out of touch with the people' or 'The Queen today denied . . .'

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) give as an example of metonymy the phrases 'she's just a pretty face', 'there are a lot of faces out there in the audience', and 'we need some new faces around here'. Here the face as part of the human body stands for or represents the whole human body -this idea of part for whole is also sometimes referred to as **synecdoche**. Lakoff and Johnson go on to show that

metonymic uses are not random, but systematic, in that they show how we organize our thoughts, actions and attitudes.

Linguistic features found in the speeches of politicians

Inaugural speech as a form of discourse offers elected public office holders the opportunity to make promises and to give assurance of good governance through effective language use. Through the analyzed speech, Trump makes a lot of presuppositions to demonstrate his vast knowledge of the Americans and current socio-political realities of the United States of America. The presuppositions serve as premise for the various promises he makes. They also account for the prevalence of structurally simple sentences through which he draws on the shared knowledge of his American listeners without boring details.

Ayeomoni and Akinkulere (2012) use the framework of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) speech act theory to this analysis of President Musa Yar'adua's victory and inaugural speeches. They identify the triad of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in the speeches and analyse their pragmatic patterns. The study finds that though Yar'adua uses a range of speech acts such as assertives, directives, expressives, verdictives, commissives, and declaratives, asserts are however predominant in his speeches.

A pragma-stylistic analysis of President Goodluck Jonathan's inaugural speech with the aim of explaining the linguistic acts of the speech is done by Abuya (2012). The definition in this study borrows from Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) classification in their theory of speech acts. The paper identifies some locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. By analyzing the acts, the paper shows that President Jonathan's speech is made up of assertive, verdictive, commissive, and declarative acts, with the commissive being more widespread compared to others.

Balogun (2015) examines the use of parallelism in the speeches of President Goodluck Jonathan and President Barack Obama. This time, he uses Davy and Crystal's (1969) stylistic theory to appreciate how emphasis and foregrounding are employed in their speeches. He additionally indicates in his work that President Obama uses parallelism more aesthetically than Jonathan, which he attributed to the difference in the experience the two speakers have with the language. Furthermore, the study finds that repetition considerably contributes to the effects of foregrounding in both presidents' speeches.

One more academic paper, for example, states that "public speeches of American and Kazakh politicians have been compared. It has been proved that in the inaugural speeches of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the President of the United States Barack Obama use plenty of figures of speech to bolster the emotional effect and to accentuate their engagement with the topics". Both presidents, in their speeches, manipulate rhetoric to achieve their goals. But Obama uses more stylistic devices in his speeches than Tokayev. The analysis has represented that the most dominant stylistic device in their speeches is metaphors. It implies that presidents use metaphorical language since metaphors do have a huge impact on people and help gain support. Obama appeals to the audience's awareness by emphasizing economic and educational issues, whereas Tokayev evokes emotions by stressing national unity (Ademi et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The relationship between politics and language is very intricate. Language performs functions of communication, empowerment, and cultural preservation. Politically, language is identification, sovereignty, and rights. This article discusses how politicians use language in their communication. It is indicative of the ability of politicians to equivocate in order to get around uncomfortable questions, their use of rhetorical devices that will procure applause and thus enhance their popularity, and their strategic use of personal pronouns to convey attitudes and stances, social stratification, and motivations. Furthermore, this article will examine how metaphor is used within political communication. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) showed that metaphors can highlight one aspect at the expense of another, thus simplifying a complex message, but they can also lead to misleading perceptions of reality. For example, Bush administration used a wide range of metaphors to justify military actions in the Gulf War (Lakoff, 1991).

A common language is vital for fostering national unity and identity. In nationalism, language is a key political tool for shaping national identity and forming a cohesive society. It plays a significant role in communication, persuasion, and creating political meanings and identities. Understanding the link between language and politics is crucial for analyzing political discourse, theory, and practice.

Language captures culture, history, and values of a nation, which influences governance, identity, unity, political discourse, legislation, and education. In recent writings on language and political behavior by Carver & Pikalo (2008), Chilton (2004), Fairclough (2000), and Wilson (1990) metaphors in political language are shown to be tools with which politicians oversimplify arguments, incite emotions, or in some instances show contempt of opponents. Metaphors assist politicians to gain power, demean the opponent, make their actions look right, and stress particular issues. This study is hopefully going to be used as the springboard into more and deeper research concerning the relationship between language and politics.

Finally, In Afghan political discourse, language is a vital tool for addressing the country's ethnic and linguistic diversity. Politicians use language strategically to foster national unity by promoting a shared identity and bridging ethnic divides, often switching between Dari and Pashto to engage different linguistic communities. This inclusiveness helps them build broader political support and address regional issues effectively. Politicians also use language to project their authority and gain legitimacy. For example, former President Ashraf Ghani frequently used formal and authoritative language to discuss issues of national security and development, aiming to bolster his position as a strong leader. Similarly, Hamid Karzai used inclusive rhetoric to build support across various ethnic groups, emphasizing unity and national cohesion.

Language is also crucial in mobilizing support during elections in Afghanistan. Afghan Politicians use persuasive rhetoric and slogans to appeal to voters. During election campaigns, candidates employ emotive language and address local issues to connect with their electorate on a personal level, as seen in the use of traditional proverbs and culturally resonant phrases. Overall, Afghan politicians use language to build national unity by connecting with diverse ethnic groups; to assert authority; to persuade and mobilize public support through emotive and persuasive rhetoric.

Language and power

Language has the potential to yield tremendous power - just take a look at some of the world's most 'successful' dictators. Hitler managed to convince thousands of people to help him undertake one of the worst genocides the world has ever seen, but how? The answer is with language.

Dictators aren't the only people who have a way with words. The media, advertising agencies, educational institutions, politicians, religious institutes, the monarchy (the list goes on) all use language to help them maintain authority or gain influence over others.

So, how exactly is language used to create and maintain power? This article will:

- Examine various types of power
- Explore different language features used to represent power
- Analyse [discourse](#) in relation to power
- Introduce theories that are key to understanding the relationship between language and power.

Language and power

According to linguist **Shân Wareing** (1999), there are three main types of power:¹

- **Political power** - power held by people with authority, such as politicians and the police.
- **Personal power** - power based on an individual's occupation or role in society. For example, a headteacher would likely hold more power than a teaching assistant.
- **Social group power** - power held by a group of people due to certain social factors, such as class, ethnicity, gender, or age.

[Which social groups do you think hold the most power in society, why?](#)

Wareing suggested that these three types of power can be divided into **instrumental power** or **influential power**. People, or organisations, can hold instrumental power, influential power, or both.

Let's take a look at these types of power in more detail.

Instrumental power

Instrumental power is seen as authoritative power. Typically speaking, someone who has instrumental power has power **simply because of who they are**. These people do not have to convince anyone of their power or persuade anyone to listen to them; others must listen to them simply because of the authority they have.

Headteachers, government officials, and the police are figures who have instrumental power.

People or organisations with instrumental power use language to maintain or enforce their authority.

Features of instrumental power language include:

- **Formal register**
- **Imperative sentences** - giving requests, demands, or advice
- **Modal verbs** - e.g., 'you should'; 'you must'
- **Mitigation** - using language to reduce the seriousness of what is being said
- **Conditional sentences** - e.g., 'if you don't respond soon, further action will be taken.'
- **Declarative statements** - e.g., 'in today's class we will look at declarative statements.'
- **Latinate words** - words derived from or imitating Latin

Influential power

Influential power refers to when a person (or group of people) does not have any authority but is trying to gain power and influence over others. Those who wish to gain influential power may use language to persuade others to believe in them or support them. This type of power is often found in politics, the media, and marketing.

Features of influential power language include:

- **Assertions** - presenting opinions as facts, e.g., 'we all know that England is the greatest country in the world'
- **Metaphors** - the use of established metaphors can reassure the audience and evoke the power of memory, establishing a bond between the speaker and the listener.
- **Loaded language** - language that can evoke strong emotions and/or exploit feelings
- **Embedded assumptions** - e.g., assuming the listener is really interested in what the speaker has to say

In some spheres of society, such as in politics, both [aspects](#) of power are present. Politicians have authority over us, as they impose the laws we must follow; however, they must also try to persuade us to continue voting for them and their policies.

Language and power examples

We can see examples of language being used to assert power all around us. Among other reasons, language can be used to make us believe in something or someone, to persuade us to buy something or vote for someone, and to ensure we follow the law and behave as ‘good citizens’.

With that in mind, where do you think we most commonly see language being used to assert power?

Here are a few examples we came up with:

- In the media
- The news
- Advertising
- Politics
- Speeches
- Education
- Law
- Religion

Language and power in politics

Politics and power (both instrumental and influential power) go hand in hand. Politicians use **political rhetoric** in their speeches to persuade others to give them power.

Rhetoric: the art of using language effectively and persuasively; therefore, political rhetoric refers to the strategies used to effectively create persuasive arguments in political debates.

Here are some of the strategies used in political rhetoric:

- **Repetition**
- **Rule of three** - e.g., Tony Blair’s ‘Education, Education, Education’ policy
- **Use of 1st person plural pronouns** - ‘we’, ‘us’; e.g., the Queen’s use of the royal ‘we’
- [Hyperbole](#) - exaggeration
- **Rhetorical questions**
- **Leading questions** - e.g., ‘you don’t want your country to be run by a clown, do you?’

- **Changes in tone and [intonation](#)**
- **Use of lists**
- **Using imperative verbs** - verbs used to create imperative sentences, e.g., ‘act now’ or ‘speak up’
- **Use of humour**
- **[Tautology](#)** - saying the same thing twice but using different words to do so, e.g., ‘it’s 7 am in the morning’
- **Prevarication** - not answering direct questions

Random reflections on the power of language

Democracy

No single person or institution can monopolise language, however ‘powerful’ they may be, as language is, by its nature, democratic. Simply having a command of a language — written, spoken, signed, drawn etc — means that we can use it however we like and to communicate whatever we want.

Humility

On resisting tyranny, one author advises: “Avoid pronouncing the phrases everyone else does. Think up your own way of speaking”. This relates not only to chanting the same words (and ideas) as others do or expect from us, but also resisting a narrowing of our vocabulary and thoughts. The world is full of information from myriad sources, and this diversity calls for us to be humble and recognise that there’s so much more we don’t know, and to allow ourselves to challenge our own thinking and be open to being proven wrong.

Challenge

‘No’ is a powerful word because it stops people and their assumptions and expectations in their tracks. A firm ‘no’ from an adult to a child can prompt obedience, but this effect is as much about the meaning of the word as it is about solidifying one’s authority in a power dynamic that places the older and bigger

person in charge and the younger and smaller one in compliance. But ‘no’ works both ways, and while such an exclamation can be obeyed, it can also be challenged, as ‘no, you can’t’ leads to ‘no, I can’.

Fear

Institutions and individuals use language both to build their power and to maintain it. In human trafficking, victims are often groomed not through physical submission, but through language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, isolates and shames them into compliance. Meanwhile in the case of politics we have demagogic rhetoric, whereby the objective of a simple sentence (and the idea it carries) is nothing more than to convince voters by stirring their fears and desires.

Protest

That actions speak louder than words is difficult to refute. When Rosa Parks refused to stand up, that action spoke to many people without a single word. After the Tank Man stood in front of a convoy in Tiananmen Square, it eventually became one of the most iconic symbols of protest. And such actions are sometimes captured on camera, reminding us, too, that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’.

Dominance

Asserting power and dominance requires obedience from others, but obedience isn’t just achieved through coercive means such as force and violence; the mere threat of these is enough to induce it, and this is done indirectly through language. When something is ‘banned’ and ‘will not be tolerated’ is sometimes enough. A clenched fist or a stern look can also suffice. Language, however we

express it, can be loaded with assumptions of power and authority which, whether real or perceived, makes us react and act a certain way.

Identity

Commanding a language and being understood forges a powerful feeling of belonging — to a family, a community, a culture or a country. This is especially true when discussing national identity, but not all citizens can talk of having a national language. Outside of Europe, for instance, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish are inescapably the languages of the colonisers, as language is never ahistorical or apolitical, especially when you know one stripped you of your own.

Assumptions

When we communicate through words, it's the result of using grammar and vocabulary to translate our thoughts and feelings, but words also affect the way we think. The media, for instance, uses particular words, images or other techniques to affect the way audiences perceive something. Calling young people 'snowflakes' or refugees 'marauding migrants' can sway public opinion on these groups, as labels are always charged with assumptions and expectations.

Compliance

The language of telling a child to sit like a girl or that they're such a brave little boy doesn't stop at the last word; it continues in the actions that follow. Legs together, feeling of shame for crying... these are the unspoken expressions of compliance, when we do as we're told and grow into a broad brushstroke of an idea that we had no say in designing.

Stereotype

Labels and stereotypes mislead us into thinking something or someone is only a particular way. Such assumptions abound especially for groups who've historically been downtrodden: women, children, people of colour, immigrants, religious groups, sexual minorities, and so on. For girls and women, labels can range from 'Angry Black Woman' and 'Dutiful Wife' to 'Feminist Killjoy' and 'Pretty Princess'. And when we replicate these labels uncritically, we feed the stereotype.

Diversity

Generic terms are convenient terms, but they limit our perception of things. 'Man' or 'mankind', for instance, are supposed to be all-encompassing, but they're far from inclusive of the diversity of humanity. Similarly, 'child' is taken to include girls, boys, infants, adolescents, teenagers, and youth, yet rarely is intended to mean all of them at the same time.

Freedom

All the words we're not supposed to say, let alone come to know them. Some words are 'dirty' and can get us into trouble, but not in the way we're probably thinking. Depending on the country, talk of freedoms and rights gets people in detention and forced labour camps or shot and buried, because such words need to be silenced, it's believed, because they are a risk to the status quo. But it's not because the words in and of themselves are dangerous; it's the ideas they carry.

Power, language and social relations: doing things with words

-
- [Youssef Sourgo](#)
 - July 31, 2013 12:38 a.m.
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Casablanca - The study of the relationship between “language, power” and social relations has clearly shifted from proving the existence of this relationship, to probing and understanding its underpinnings and implications. Most linguists now agree that the relationship between “language and power” is a mutual relationship.

Powerful institutions and individuals use language as both a means to construct their power and as a way to maintain it. Language thus becomes necessary for the maintenance of power, and the power and effect of language in turn rely on the power of individuals and institutions themselves.

Language is delineated as “a social practice” (Fowler 61), by which power relations are established and sustained. This supports Fairclough’s (1989) view that power is not only built and sustained via coercive means (by force), but also via indirect ways (the use of language).

Besides institutional power, or the power exercised by entities that are overtly recognized for holding a position of authority (the police, for example), there also exist other types of power relations: between family members, between educated and uneducated people, and so forth. Individuals and groups in this category of power relations use language as their main tool for maintaining status and power.

A father in a phallogentric family, for example, would not forcibly have to resort to force in order to impose his authority over the other members of his family. Consider the following example taken from a short story entitled *A Meeting in the Dark*, by African writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o:

Sit down. Where are you going?

‘For a walk, Father,’ he answered evasively.

‘To the village?’

‘Well-yes-no. I mean, nowhere in particular.’

We can clearly see in this short conversation that the father is exerting his authority on his son. The father here does not resort to force while talking to his son, something that we can deduce from the absence of any textual reference by the author to the use of power by the

father. On the contrary, the father resorts to a straightforward, strict style of address with his son ('Sit down. Where are you going?').

The style of speech deployed in the example is clearly loaded with power and authority, bearing in mind that the context in which this conversation takes place is within a patriarchal family, in which the father, who is a fervent preacher, is the member in control. The example above supports Fairclough's (1989) view that power relations are not class-bound, and can be manifested through the use of language during social interactions between individuals.

Other scholars, namely Fowler (1985) and Kramarae, Schultz and O'Barr (1984), have supported the view that power is developed and maintained via interaction (the social practice of language). These scholars argue that language or discourse serve to construct and manipulate concepts of power in society.

The discursive construction of power by institutions and individuals can also lead to changing social practices and realities (Mayr 4). The way institutions and individuals use language to consolidate and promote their ideological interests, or simply to preserve their authority over other institutions and individuals, changes social relationships (between married couples, for example) or social practices (e.g., the way one does his/her work).

For instance, an uneducated person who is exposed daily to a media content that uses language to promote patriarchal principles is likely to be influenced by such ideas, and might consequently put those principles into practice within his or her own marital life. The media in this case serves certain ideological purposes that might pertain to a dominant community (Mayr 2). Hence, these types of media use language in such a way they change people's perceptions of and attitudes towards their social practices and relationships.

Fairclough (1989), Fowler (1985) and Kramarae, Schultz and O'Barr (1984) all agree that language is "a social practice," and that power is constructed and developed via social interactions marked by hierarchy and asymmetry. However, we can still draw a distinction between two different uses of language in the context of power relationships: language as public discourse, and language as private discourse (Bielsa and O'Donnel 1).

The former refers to the language used by powerful public institutions through the mass media. The power exercised via this public use of language usually stems from governments and political parties. Those powerful institutions use language or "public

discourse” (Dijk 84) to construct and promote their dominance, by producing knowledge about society and advertising a given social practice (Mayr 3).

The press, for example, uses a variety of techniques to change the way people perceive of and think about a certain social phenomenon. Fowler (1979) presents a “checklist” that students of Critical Linguistics can refer to in their analysis of the functions that discourse serves in the context of power relations.

Transitivity is one main feature included in Fowler’s (1979) checklist of categories of structure. It generally refers to how meaning is represented in a clause (Kay and Aylett 1). In the print media, for instance, choices of transitivity structures are not arbitrary. They serve a certain ideological purpose that is clearly manifested in how different newspaper headlines, for example, report the same events, but with dissimilar focuses and interests. Below are two headlines from two different American daily newspapers reporting the same piece of news:

Features of Language and Power

We’ve seen some examples of how language is used to represent power, but let’s take a look at some more language features in both spoken and written [discourse](#) that are used to maintain and enforce power.

Lexical choice

- **Emotive language** - e.g., emotive adjectives used in the House of Commons include 'depraved', 'sickening', and 'unimaginable'
- **Figurative language** - e.g., metaphors, similes, and [personification](#)
- **Forms of address** - someone with power may refer to others by their first names but expect to be addressed more formally, i.e., 'miss', 'sir', 'ma'am' etc.
- **Synthetic personalisation** - Fairclough (1989) coined the term ‘synthetic personalisation’ to describe how powerful institutes address the mass as individuals to create a feeling of friendliness and reinforce their power.²

Can you identify any of these language features used to maintain and enforce power in the following quote?

And you have changed the face of Congress, the Presidency, and the political process itself. Yes, you, my fellow Americans, have forced the spring. Now we must do the work the season demands.

(Bill Clinton, January 20, 1993)

In Bill Clinton's first inaugural speech, he utilised synthetic personalisation to address the American people individually and repeatedly used the [pronoun](#) 'you'. He also used [figurative language](#), using spring (the season) as a [metaphor](#) for the country moving forward and away from debt.

Grammar

- [Interrogatives](#) - asking the listener/reader questions
- **Modal verbs** - e.g., 'you should'; 'you must'
- **Imperative sentences** - commands or requests, e.g., 'vote now!'

Can you identify any of these grammatical features in the following Coca-Cola advertisement?

Sign up for free to unlock all images and more.

UNLOCK NOW

Fig. 2 - Coca-Cola advert and slogan.

This advert from Coca-Cola uses the imperative sentence, 'open happiness', to tell the audience what to do and persuade them to buy Coca-Cola's product.

Phonology

- [Alliteration](#) - the repetition of letters or sounds
- **Assonance** - the repetition of vowel sounds
- **Rising and falling [intonation](#)**

Can you identify any of these phonological features in this UK Conservative Party election campaign slogan?

Strong and stable leadership.

(2007)

Here, the alliteration of the letter 'S' makes the slogan more memorable and gives it staying power.

Spoken conversational features

We can examine [discourse](#) in conversations to see who holds power based on which language features they use.

Here is a handy chart to help you recognise the dominant and submissive participants in a conversation:

The dominant participant	The submissive participant
Sets the subject and tone of the conversation	Responds to the dominant participant
Changes the direction of the conversation	Follows the directional change
Talks the most	Listens the most
Interrupts and overlaps others	Avoids interrupting others
May be unresponsive when they have had enough of the conversation	Uses more formal forms of address ('sir', 'ma'am' etc.)

Language and power research

When engaging in conversation, people who have power or wish to have it will utilise specific strategies when talking to help them establish their dominance. Some of these strategies include interrupting others, being polite or impolite, committing face-saving and face-threatening acts, and flouting Grice's Maxims.

Not sure what some of those terms mean? Don't worry! This brings us to the key theorists in language and power and their arguments, including:

- **Fairclough's** *Language and Power* (1984)
- **Goffman's** Face Work Theory (1967) and **Brown and Levinson's** [Politeness Theory](#) (1987)
- **Coulthard and Sinclair's** Initiation-Response-Feedback Model (1975)
- **Grice's** Conversational Maxims (1975)

Fairclough

In *Language and Power* (1984), Fairclough explains how language serves as a tool to maintain and create power in society.

Fairclough suggested that many encounters (this is a broad term, encompassing not only conversations but also reading advertisements, for example) are unequal and that the language we use (or are constrained to use) reflects the power structures in society. Fairclough argues that, in a capitalist society, power relations are typically divided into the dominant and dominated classes, i.e., business or landowners and their workers. Fairclough based a lot of his work on **Michel Foucault's** work on [discourse](#) and power.

Fairclough states that we should analyse language to recognise when it is being used by the powerful to persuade or influence us. Fairclough named this analytical practice '**critical [discourse analysis](#)**'.

A key part of critical [discourse analysis](#) can be split into two disciplines:

- **Power in [discourse](#)** - the lexicon, strategies, and language structures used to create power
- **Power behind discourse** - The sociological and ideological reasons behind who is asserting power over others and why.

Fairclough also discussed the power behind advertising and coined the term '**synthetic personalisation**' (remember we discussed this earlier!). Synthetic personalisation is a technique that large corporations use to create a sense of friendship between themselves and their potential customers by addressing them on a personal level.

Goffman, Brown, and Levinson

Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson created their [Politeness Theory](#) (1987) based on Erving Goffman's Face Work theory (1967). Face Work refers to the act of preserving one's 'face' and appealing to or preserving another's 'face'.³

'Face' is an abstract concept and has nothing to do with your physical face. Goffman recommends thinking of your 'face' more like a mask we wear in social situations.

Brown and Levinson stated that the levels of politeness we use with others are often dependent on power relations - the more powerful they are, the more polite we are.

Two important terms to understand here are '**face-saving acts**' (preventing others from feeling publicly embarrassed) and '**face-threatening acts**' (behaviour that may embarrass others). Those in less powerful positions are more likely to perform face-saving acts for those with more power.

Sinclair and Coulthard

In 1975, [Sinclair and Coulthard](#) introduced the **Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model**.⁴ The model can be used to describe and highlight power relations between the teacher and the student in a classroom. [Sinclair and Coulthard](#) state that the teacher (the one with the power) initiates the [discourse](#) by asking a question, the student (the one without the power) gives a response, and the teacher then provides some sort of feedback.

Teacher - *'What did you do this weekend?'*

Student - *'I went to the museum.'*

Teacher - *'That sounds nice. What did you learn?'*

Grice

Grice's **conversational maxims**, also known as '**The Gricean Maxims**', are based on Grice's **Cooperative Principle**, which aims to explain how people achieve effective communication in everyday situations.

In *Logic and Conversation* (1975), Grice introduced his four conversational maxims. They are:

- **Maxim of Quality**
- **Maxim of Quantity**
- **Maxim of Relevance**
- **Maxim of Manner**

These maxims are based on Grice's observation that anyone who wished to engage in meaningful conversation usually attempts to be truthful, informative, relevant, and clear.

However, these conversational maxims are **not always followed by everyone** and are often **violated** or **flouted**:

- When maxims are violated, they are broken secretly, and it's usually considered quite serious (such as lying to someone).
- When maxims are flouted, this is considered less severe than violating a maxim and is done far more often. Being ironic, using metaphors, pretending to mishear someone, and using vocabulary you know your listener won't understand are all examples of flouting Grice's Maxims.

Grice suggested that those with more power, or those wishing to create the illusion of having more power, are more likely to flout Grice's maxims during conversations.

Grice's conversational maxims, and the flouting of them to create a sense of power, can be applied to any text that appears conversational, including advertising.

Language and Power - Key takeaways

- According to Wareing, there are three main types of power: political power, personal power, and social group power. These types of power can be divided into either instrumental or influential power.
- Instrumental power is held by those who have authority over others due to who they are (such as the Queen). On the other hand, influential power is held by those who aim to influence and persuade others (such as politicians and advertisers).
- We can see language being used to assert power in the media, the news, advertising, politics, speeches, education, the law, and religion.

- Some language features used to convey power include rhetorical questions, imperative sentences, [alliteration](#), the rule of three, emotive language, [modal verbs](#), and synthetic personalisation.
- Key theorists include Fairclough, Goffman, Brown, Levinson, Coulthard and Sinclair, and Grice.

Language and Identity Essay

Introduction

Language refers to the means of expression that people use for communication. Hence, it is an essential tool for interaction, and it may also be associated with a person's individuality. Yet, how is language related to identity exactly?

In essence, people are distinctively different from each other and use speech to portray their differences or similarities. A specific language may help in uniting people who belong to a particular social group. So, there is a close relationship between language and identity from the get-go.

Every individual has a certain identity, but it is not static. It is dependent on the occasion, purpose, and context. People in new geographical locations may redefine their identities to conform to their surroundings. Thus, to explain the relationship of language and identity, we should start by examining how a person can change due to the environment.

Language may identify an individual with a certain social status, race, nationality, or gender. Generally, people who identify themselves with a specific group use a shared language. Therefore, it can be regarded as a unifying factor that helps determine a given group's personality. It gives them a sense of belonging due to a shared experience and accessible communication.

In this language and identity essay, we have explored how the concepts influence each other in detail.

Language and Identity: Gender

There is a close relationship between language and gender identity. Gender variation in speech is common in various societies. In the contemporary world, women and men communicate using different forms of language. Differences in the social status of men and women are the main factors that contribute to the difference in speech. Social issues of power and subordination between men and women usually lead to difference in speech between the two genders.

Most societies require women to more polite speech than men. The society usually sanctions the use of profanity or obscenity by women. In such societies, women have a subordinate role and their social freedom is less than that of men. In addition, women may have greater insecurity, uncertainty, and lack of confidence (Edwards 135). Therefore, one may use language to determine the social freedom of a society.

Language and Identity: Race

There is a very strong relationship between language and racial or ethnic identity. The history of individuals determines their language. Therefore, people who have a similar racial background may use similar language for communication. The mother tongue is one of the aspects of racial identity that one acquires by virtue of birth. Racial identity may be critical in the early life of an individual as it gives an individual a sense of belonging.

In most homes, people use a certain language to communicate with their family members. This makes people who use the language to consciously or unconsciously associate use of the language with a sense of endearment. The language is distinctively different from the public language. Hispanics who live in America may associate Spanish with racial identity.

Therefore, they may use English to communicate in public, but address their close friends and family members using Spanish. Spanish enables them to express their feelings in ways that are extremely difficult in English (Kirsznier and Mandell 135). Speaking in a certain language creates a sense of belonging to people who communicate using the language. Using the language creates an 'us and them' situation between people who use the language and those who do not.

In some instances, the use of a certain language among the social minority may create social isolation. People may not be able to have good relations with people who do not speak their native language. In addition, they may be unable to express their feelings clearly using the language commonly used by the public. Even in societies that speak one language, people

use a certain language when communicating with their friends or close family members. The language enables them to express their feelings clearly.

Aria by Richard Rodriguez highlights how language may be a source of racial identity. The author narrates how Spanish affected his early life. When Rodriguez was young, Spanish was the only language that members of his family used to communicate when at home. This is despite the fact that they lived in California where English was the public language. Using Spanish created a sense of endearment among the family members.

It made them feel relaxed and welcomed at home. Rodriguez's family used to refer to the white people who spoke English as *los gringos* – the others (Rodriguez 134). Communicating using Spanish was both advantageous and disadvantageous to the family. It strengthened the family ties and gave the members of the family a sense of belonging. However, it led to social isolation of the family. Rodriguez family members could only socialize with their relatives who also communicated using Spanish.

Communicating using Spanish had a negative effect on the learning abilities of Rodriguez and his siblings. However, after the intervention of nuns from school, Rodriguez's family started communicating at home using English. This led to significant improvement in the social life of members of the family. However, after speaking in English for long time, Rodriguez forgot how to speak Spanish properly. This elicited taunts from various relatives who referred to him as *pocho* – someone who had lost his identity (Rodriguez 137).

Therefore, according to the relatives, the ability to communicate in Spanish was an integral part of their identity. *Aria* highlights the importance of language in racial identity. In fact, even after the integration of Rodriguez into the American society, he still had feelings of nostalgia when he heard someone speaking Spanish in the streets. This shows that Rodriguez still associated Spanish with his racial identity.

Language and Identity: Social Status

It is easy to detect the social status of people from their speech. The education level is one of the major factors that affect the language of individuals. People who belong to high social classes are more likely to receive quality education, therefore, enabling people from high social classes to use proper language while communicating.

People from different social backgrounds usually have different dialects. Therefore, grammatical differences can help in determining their social backgrounds. In addition, people

from different social classes usually have phonological and phonetic differences. Therefore, people from different social status may have different accents.

In the nineteenth century, slavery was a common activity in America. Slaves belonged to the lowest social class in the society. Their masters strived to ensure that they maintain the status quo. Therefore, it was wrong for slaves to learn how to read and write. The ability to read and write would have increased the intellectual capabilities of the slaves. Therefore, inability to read and write condemned the slaves to eternal slavery. Language created a social barrier between the slaves and their masters (Douglass 147).

All contemporary societies have social stratifications. Social stratification refers to the order of hierarchy of social classes in a society. The social distance between two groups determines how the language in the social groups affects each other. A change in language in the higher social class would have minimal effect on the language in the lower social groups. In fact, it may not even affect the language in the lower social groups. Social groups that have a small social distance may use almost identical languages.

Barriers

Language helps in improving communication between two parties. However, the effectiveness of communication depends on the ability of both parties to understand the language. Therefore, language may either facilitate or impair communication between two parties. People should be able to decipher the meaning of various words in a certain language.

Failure to understand the language effectively may make an individual have the wrong understanding of the message. This is because certain words may have different meanings in different contexts. Therefore, it is vital for the individual speaking to take into consideration ability of the listeners to understand the information (Tan 142).

Conclusion

Language has two main functions. It helps in communication and gives a group of people a sense of identity and pride. People usually identify themselves with a certain language. Various groups of people use a certain jargon that is only comprehensible to people within the group.

Language and Identity

In communication, there are many ways that people can express elements of their identity. There are also many [aspects](#) to a person's life that define their identity. Language can both give someone identity and allows them to share the aspects of it, such as their age, gender or where they live. We will look at the relationship between language and identity, how this relates to sociolinguistic study, and some examples of identity in language use.

The Relationship Between Language and Identity

A person's identity can be influenced by different **factors** (parents, peers and region) at different ages. These factors can influence a person's language use.

- During childhood, a person's language will mirror their **parents'** as they are who they'll interact with the most.
- When speakers reach secondary school, they may start to adopt their **peers'** language features due to socialising with more social groups.
- A person's **regional identity** will be shown through their use of a regional [accent](#). This could change to take on features of different regions, for example, if someone moves to a different area for a significant length of time.

Now let's have a look at how identity more specifically relates to [aspects](#) of sociolinguistic study.

Language and Identity in Sociolinguistics

A person's language is influenced by their social groups, leading us to the field of sociolinguistics.

[Sociolinguistics](#) is the study of how social factors such as age and gender can affect language use. This takes into account how someone speaks and the **judgements and perceptions** associated with language features.

The social factors that can affect a person's language and identity include:

- Region (location)
- Gender
- Age
- Occupation

- Class
- Ethnicity

Language use is affected by factors such as age, religion, occupation, cultural background, and others!

The use of different language features can imply a sense of belonging to different social groups. These group-specific features are used to portray a certain identity to the world. We call language use that shows belonging to a certain social groups **sociolects**.

Sociolect is a combination of the terms 'social' and '[dialect](#)'. The term refers to language use that is specific to people belonging to the same social group and share the same social factors, such as class, age, or occupation.

For example, teenagers may use [slang](#) terms such as '*GOAT*' (greatest of all time), '*lit*' (amazing/brilliant), or '*V*' (very) so that they can differentiate themselves from adults and portray their age as a focal point of their identity.

A speaker can also show individual identity by using their **idiolect**.

Idiolect refers to the specific way an individual speaks. Idiolects have language features from different social groups, creating a unique mix of features.

Stop procrastinating with our smart planner features for Language and Identity

Language and Identity Examples

Let's look at some examples of how identity is shown in language relating to two of the main social factors: region and class.

Region

A real-life example of how region (geographical location) can impact language and be used as a marker for identity can be seen in music. Some singers will choose to perform in a standard British or American [accent](#) to appeal to a larger audience, even though that's not their original accent. However, some singers choose to retain their regional accents when singing. This allows them to show their region as part of their identity.

The Proclaimers (who sang *500 Miles*) and Twin Atlantic (who sang *Heart and soul*) both sing with their Scottish accents, showing us that they value their home region as part of their identity and want to share it with their audience.

Singers like these go against the norm of singers opting to sing in a standardised [accent](#). Think of Adele - she has a strong cockney [accent](#) when she's speaking but swaps to a standard American [accent](#) when she sings.

Class

As a general rule regarding class and language, we can state that people with a higher class are more likely to speak with Received Pronunciation (RP); this is because RP has historically been the accent used and taught in educational institutes.

An example of this can be seen in the speech of the Queen. She is of the upper class and always uses Received Pronunciation. By doing this, she is showing the upper-class aspect of her identity through her language.

Now that we understand the influence identity has on someone's language, we can look at how identity applies to sociolinguistic theories.

Region

Carmen Llamas

In 1968, Middlesbrough changed from being part of Yorkshire to being part of the Teesside County Borough. This meant that the Middlesbrough accent changed from having primarily Yorkshire accent and [dialect](#) features to then having features typical of the North East.

Linguist **Carmen Llamas** carried out a study in 2000 into the **linguistic variation in Middlesbrough** and found the following:

- Older people used more Yorkshire [accent](#) features.
- Younger people used more North-East features.
- There is a strong hostility towards being labelled a 'geordie'.
- The people of Middlesbrough wished to be identified as North-East or Middlesbrough through their [accent](#).¹

Gender

George Keith and John Shuttleworth

In 1999, linguists **Keith and Shuttleworth** carried out a series of **conversation analyses of men's and women's speech**. Their findings concluded that there are typical speech characteristics for each gender, shown in the table below:

Women	Men
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk too much• More polite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swear more• Avoid emotions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitant • Complain or nag • Ask questions • Support each other • More cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insult each other • Competitive in conversation • Dominate conversation • Speak with authority • Give more commands • Interrupt more • Have demeaning names for women • Talk about women and machines in the same way • Talk about sports
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Keith and Shuttleworth's findings align with typical **gender stereotypes**. People may alter how they speak to avoid language that encourages stereotypical judgements based on gender.²

Age

Gary Ives

Linguist Gary Ives interviewed a group of teenagers in West Yorkshire to document the features of **adolescent language use**. He found recurring patterns in the speech of the teens.

These were:

- Their speech is linked by an informal register.
- The most common topic of conversation is relationships.
- [Taboo](#) language is part of the teen vernacular.
- [Dialect](#) is often used when speaking.
- [Slang](#) is common.
- Informal lexical choices are often linked by common themes or topics.³

Teenagers may use some or all of these features to place themselves in the group identity of 'teenager.' Teenagers who don't want to be defined by the stereotype of 'teenager' will often choose not to use these features in their language.

Occupation

Michael Nelson

Linguist **Michael Nelson** carried out a study in 2000 into the concept of **business lexis**. He concluded that people at work use language in a semantic field of business, for example:

- business
- people
- companies
- institutions
- money
- time
- technology

These are some words which might fit into the "business" lexical field, for example. He also found that certain words or topics were not used, for example:

- weekends
- personal issues
- family
- society
- house and home
- hobbies

Nelson's theory can be linked to identity by looking at a person's workplace language.

When **at work**, speakers may:

- Use Nelson's business lexis to create a professional identity and keep their home identity private, or;
- Deviate from Nelson's business lexis and use more of their idiolect features to create a more personable and approachable identity.⁴

Now that we've looked at identity and sociolinguistic theories, let's have a look at a theory that shows how people change their language to show how they **don't** belong to certain social groups.

Language and Identity - Key Takeaways

- A person's identity can be represented through their language use.
- A person's identity is often influenced by the social groups they're in.

- Social factors that can contribute to someone's identity are region, gender, age, occupation, class and ethnicity.
- Some key theorists in language and identity include M. [Halliday](#), G. Ives, C. Llamas, and M. Nelson.
- Anti-language is used by groups of people who want an alternative to 'normal' society and seek a covert identity.

Michael Halliday's Anti-language

Anti-language is the language of an anti-society that exists as an alternative to 'normal' society.

Anti-language is linked to **identity** as it is used when a group of people seek a **covert identity**.

A **covert identity** is a secret identity. The word **covert** refers to something that is hidden.

After research into anti-languages and their uses, [Halliday](#) found that:

- Anti-languages are generally shown through a specific lexicon.
- They share the same grammar as the main society but have a different vocabulary.
- Users of anti-languages can communicate meanings to each other that are inaccessible to a non-user.
- Groups who use anti-language view it as fundamental to their identity.⁵

The best way to understand the concept of anti-languages is to look at a real-life example.

Polari

Polari is an example of an **anti-language**. Historically, it was used in the UK by gay men but has now mostly fallen out of use. The lexicon was derived from a variety of

different sources including Cockney rhyming [slang](#), backslang, Italian, USA airforce slang, and drug-user slang.

Backslang is a form of anti-language where words are said as if they're spelt backwards. Examples of backslang are: "erif" (*fire*), "doog eno" (*good one*), and "delo" (*old*). This anti-language allowed gay men to communicate without being overheard. This was important at the time as it allowed them to share an aspect of their identity (being gay) that was illegal at the time.

Some examples of Polari words are:

- ajax (next to)
- bevvy (drink)
- bona (good)
- naff (awful)
- cod (awful)
- dolly (pretty)
- vada (to look)

• Identity and Sociolinguistic Theory

- There are many theories which look at the link between language use and identity and if we went through all of them we'd be here all week! So, in this article, we'll go through four of the main social groups (region, gender, age, and class) and look at one theory for each.
- We'll also look at two other theories that apply more to general language use than to particular social groups.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture, Course Code: HUM-203

Week-6

The Impact of Globalization on Language Diversity: Threats and Opportunities



Globalization has changed our world in many ways, making it smaller and more connected. But what does this mean for the languages we speak? Let's dive into the impact of globalization on language diversity, exploring both the threats and the opportunities it brings.

What is Globalization?

Globalization is how countries, cultures, and economies become interconnected through trade, communication, and technology. It allows ideas, goods, and services to move more freely worldwide. But the impact on languages can be profound as the world becomes more connected.

The Spread of Major Languages

One of the most noticeable effects of globalization is the spread of major languages like English, Spanish, and Mandarin. These languages are often used in international business, science, and

technology. As a result, they become more dominant, while smaller languages may struggle to survive.

The Impact of Globalization on Language Diversity

[Globalization](#) can pose significant threats to language diversity. Here are a few key challenges:

Language Extinction

When smaller languages are not passed down to the next generation, they risk becoming extinct. As people adopt more widely spoken languages for economic or social reasons, less common languages may disappear.

Loss of Cultural Identity

Language is a crucial part of cultural identity. When a language disappears, so does the unique culture and history it carries. This loss can devastate communities, as it erases their heritage and traditions.

Homogenization of Culture

Globalization can lead to a homogenized culture that loses diversity. When people from different backgrounds adopt similar ways of living and speaking, unique cultural practices and languages may be abandoned in favor of a more uniform global culture.

Opportunities for Language Diversity

Despite these threats, globalization also offers several opportunities to protect and even enhance language diversity.

Technological Advancements

Technology plays a significant role in preserving and promoting languages. Here are some ways it can help:

Digital Archives

Languages can be recorded and stored in digital archives. This ensures that even if a language is no longer spoken, its sounds, vocabulary, and grammar can be preserved for future generations.

Language Learning Apps

Apps like Duolingo and Babbel make learning new languages accessible and fun. These platforms can help people learn and maintain less common languages, contributing to their survival.

Online Communities

Social media and online forums allow speakers of minority languages to connect and communicate. These platforms provide spaces for people to share their languages and cultures, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Cultural Exchange

Globalization encourages cultural exchange, which can have positive effects on language diversity. Here are some ways cultural exchange can help:

Language Revitalization Programs

International organizations and governments often support efforts to revitalize endangered languages. These programs aim to teach and promote the use of minority languages, ensuring their survival.

Multilingualism

Globalization promotes multilingualism, encouraging people to learn and use multiple languages. This preserves language diversity and enriches individuals' cultural experiences and cognitive abilities.

Cultural Festivals

Cultural festivals and events celebrate linguistic diversity. These gatherings showcase different languages and cultures, raising awareness and appreciation for the world's linguistic richness.

Striking a Balance

To protect language diversity in a globalized world, it's essential to balance embracing global connections and preserving local languages and cultures.

Support for Minority Languages

Governments and organizations should provide support for minority languages. This can include funding for language education, creating media in minority languages, and recognizing these languages in official settings.

Encouraging Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Promoting bilingualism and multilingualism can help protect language diversity. By encouraging people to learn and use multiple languages, we can ensure that smaller languages continue to be spoken and valued.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness about the importance of language diversity is crucial. Education campaigns and media coverage can help people understand the value of preserving linguistic heritage and inspire action to protect it.

Wrapping Up

Globalization presents both threats and opportunities for language diversity. While it can endanger smaller languages and cultures, it also offers tools and platforms to preserve and promote them. By striking a balance and taking proactive steps to support language diversity, we can ensure that the world's rich tapestry of languages continues to thrive. So, let's celebrate and protect the languages that make our world so vibrant and unique!

Globalization and multilingualism

How languages can still survive in a hostile environment

At the time when globalization affects how businesses operate, most companies face increased competition. They have to adapt to their market and their customers' expectations. While competition among firms is related to the cost and revenues of products or services other factors may influence their success. Factors such as language and culture can also determine a firm's notoriety. In fact, effectively communicated ideas are related to one's cultural knowledge, especially when a company considers operating in an international environment. Although the process of globalization has been underway for a long time, multilingualism has played a key role in its development since the late 20th century. Interconnectedness, social media platforms as well as digital marketing strategies have recently changed how business is conducted in a global marketplace.

In the past few decades, as globalization has accelerated, the advance of English has taken on a new momentum. According to a recently published [article](#) in the Guardian, many languages have shifted towards patterns that mimic English models or have replaced English as their main working language. Even if English became the most common lingua franca in the world, other languages still prevail. Most of them still preserve a strong form of identity proper to cultures or nations. But as the world evolves, so do languages. Economic, political, social and historical changes have shaped the way we communicate. Over the years, the abundance of vocabulary, expressions, and linguistic borrowing is the result of these modifications. However, in a world that becomes day by day more

globalized, can we say that multilingualism is still relevant in a business environment?

The importance of languages from an international business perspective

Several companies say that their business growth can be related to multilingualism. They argue that communicating in different languages with native speakers made their work more efficient across international markets. According to Dr. Gabrielle Hogan-Brun (2017), research has shown that employers are prone to adopt a range of communication strategies in a variable, and flexible way. Therefore, companies would use different strategies to improve their business reach. Internally, they would install a common language such as a lingua franca like English with international partners or work in their country's native language to strengthen their ties with locals. Either way, firms would use both strategies to facilitate multilingual interactions depending on their needs. This is true as languages operate with their own cultural logic to build trust and create connections between peers. Therefore, much business still relies on multilingual services for accurate understanding which would have been difficult to sustain through the single use of automated translation or the lingua franca.

Linguists Juliane House and Jochen Rehbein (House & Rehbein 2004) said a language “serves not only as a means and a medium of communication” but also as a highly complex system where speakers “activate links between language and actions, mental activities, perception, thought patterns, knowledge systems.” It is clear that communicating across cultures can be associated with several problematics. Mainly, the language itself can become the first barrier but also because cultural differences may emphasize a misunderstanding between two speakers' sense of values or beliefs. That is why a language is more complex than a simple communication tool: it covers multiple aspects.

This is what Geert Hofstede (2010) demonstrated with his cultural dimensions model. He used data to derive relevant cultural value dimensions from an IBM employee survey conducted between 1967 and 1973 in more than 50 cultures. He concluded that a country's institutions or business organizations carry the values of the national culture. In other words, each culture has its own learned values and norms which can determine actions and play a significant role in influencing business outcomes.

Even if globalization has set some implicit rules for international businesses, yet we can find striking differences in the values produced by different cultures. Without stereotyping the issue, we can explain the differences by taking the example of the American and Japanese cultures: in the US, businessmen are considered as direct, loud and spontaneous while these traits can be seen rude by the discrete, hierarchical and polite Japanese. When confronted with other cultures, people tend to instinctively use their own system of beliefs and values, but it can easily lead to cross-cultural communication dysfunction. The addition of non-verbal communication features can imply further difficulties as well.

That is why in business, negotiating without prior cultural knowledge carries the risk of misperception. Illustrated in an Economist [article](#), two otherwise identical countries will engage in 42% more trade if they share a common language compared to countries that do not. Speaking the same language facilitates communication and makes transactions easier and more transparent as is the effect of language to that of common culture, or legal norms. The economist Dr. Jan Fidrmuc (2015) who conducted the study even noted that greater density of linguistic skills rather translates into greater trade intensity.

As globalization impacts our daily life, a more integrated linguistic strategy among individuals can bring more benefits. It challenges the way we communicate but also the way we perceive the world. While intercultural communication may further evolve, the role of languages is interrelated with

one's culture system of norms and beliefs. In my sense, even with the growing popularity of the English language, business communication still relies on additional multilingual exchanges. This is also the case for global marketing that takes into account multicultural identities to determine its own strategy. In this manner, while the lingua franca is used as a common denominator, national languages are still at the core of human relationships. In an era of globalization, a society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources has an edge in its ability to play a major role on the world stage, socially and economically. Even if it is impossible to measure every aspect of a language in a company's success, we can use it as a multipurpose tool. There is no doubt today that multilingualism plays a key role in our societies.

As described by Broeder (2008) and Martyniuk (2008), nowadays, the focus of language education has shifted from monolingualism to bilingualism/multilingualism. More and more companies require young professionals to be at least bilingual. While plurilingualism is the norm in African or Indian continents, in Europe, there has been previous motivation for monolingualism due to political and historical decisions. Even if English seems to be today on the throne of business linguistics, we can see that the ability to speak various languages becomes a highly valued feature in the corporate ladder. Despite the tendency of anglophonization, multilingualism seems to survive through education, national norms, and people's beliefs. Instead of looking at globalization as the death of world languages, we might point out its ability to bring to light hundred of other languages and cultures along with the lingua franca.

In fine, the multilingual development over the centuries rather describes a journey and not a final destination for linguistics. In a business environment, increased linguistic and cultural diversity challenges the way we perceive corporate communication through language features or ideologies. To thrive,

multilingualism needs collaborative, flexible and multilingual practices at all levels of professional and personal communication.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture, Course Code: HUM-203

Week-7

Language and Culture: Influence and Role of the Media

Reflections

In the social context, influence and role of the media may be looked upon as a medium or environment satisfying the dynamics of the human existence. The relation between influence and role of the media and culture is a complex and constantly evolving one. Modern media is the medium through which we conduct our social lives. It is a means of expressing our views, opinions and ideas. These perceptions and ideas are built up on our knowledge, understanding and experience of the world around us.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

The members of a community do not always express their views and experiences; they also share their experiences with others. The speakers identify with the language in which they communicate and consider the language as an expression of their social identity. Language, thus, becomes an expression of one's social identity. Language influences culture in many ways. One of these is via mass media.

The term 'mass media' refers to any form of public communication- whether written, broadcast or spoken which reaches a wider audience. Market research indicated that there should be a number of variables that should be maintained in order to gain competitive advantage in the business.

On seasonal period it is essential for the hotel to increase casual staffs. It is also important that Effective service improvement strategies will be accomplished through training of employees that should include providing adequate training for employees to possess the skills that are required in performing their job tasks and develop an efficient internal communication between restaurant manager and employees which will help employees to realize and understand what management expects and the media works according to the beliefs of the mass.

However, it should be noted that the corporate social responsibility is a very important aspect of the modern world of business. It is evident that once the business grows the CSR grows with it at the same time. This because with the growing involvement with the society a business makes profit out of it and it is at this point the society demands a share of this profit. This share is obviously not in cash but in kind. The society expects the business to return some of the profit acquired from the society in some way or the other. It can be done by social work or developing social amenities or simply maintaining a specific high level of the service provided by the business. Media is no exception and thus there should be a complete ethical approach of the media as it has the ability to influence huge mass at any given time.

Description of Concrete Experience

On a personal note I can always state that the struggle was to establish a binary distinction between two kinds of people. Once you get to the Enlightenment, which says and recognizes that everybody is one species, then you have to begin to find the way which marks the difference, inside the species. It is not two species, but how, why one bit of the species is different – more barbarous, more backward, more civilized than another part. Then you get into a different marking of difference: the difference which is marked inside the system. To me the word ‘culture’ has varied implications.

Testing and Application

Earlier, the print media played an effective role in the formation of public opinion. With the advent of new media in the form of television, radio, billboards etc. the participation habits of the public have also undergone a sea change. Communities and individuals are constantly overwhelmed by the huge influx of information generated by the mass media. Thus, they also serve the purpose of acting as our moral guardian. Furthermore, it is the mass media which has the immense power of making or breaking celebrities.

Influence of science and technology

Reflections

The influence of science and technology is huge. Technological aspect like the internet is still growing. It has created more space for political information as well as social and cultural ideas and opinions. This has amplified the participation level of the general masses. Not only this, it has also provided opportunity for social and cultural exchanges on a wider forum.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

In this context I would like to remind that scientific and technological developments also influence the culture of a society. The relation between science and technology and culture is one of co-dependence, co-influence as well as the representation of technology in culture and vice versa. Thus, this symbiotic relationship between the two can be perceived in two ways- how technological development influences society and how society determines the need for technological development.

Gradually, they gave way to compact discs which were smaller and could store more data. However, on a positive note, I can say that the technological advancements have changed the people’s lifestyles by making life easier for them. They have created a leisure class, made the society better informed, prepared the society for imbibing complex learning tasks as well as introduced the concept of multi-tasking. Global networking, denser social circles, cheaper prices of electronic goods and services and the growth of specialized jobs have added newer dimensions to the dynamics of human life.

Description of Concrete Experience

I can put forward innumerable examples to prove the influence of technological advancement on society. One of these is the advent of the mobile phone. It has brought about a revolution in the field of communication. It has made the people more accessible irrespective of the physical distance between them. Society also determines the need for technological advancement as in the case of modern media players. It not only my personal experience but it is true for all that the internet has revolutionized the process of the formation of public opinion. Thus, it goes without saying that technological development plays an important role in shaping the culture of a community and it has deeply affected me too.

Testing and Application

However, all these developments have come with a price. I believe pollution is the biggest concern affecting our lives and I personally, suffer from it, particularly as I am prone to smoke and dust allergy. So, increase in transportation has lead to congestion, newer technological developments have exposed us to newer forms of danger, and certain forms of entertainment are having serious social consequences. Moreover, this has lead to a tremendous increase in the occurrence of lifestyle diseases like obesity. Structural unemployment and severe climate changes have also become issues of serious concern.

However, it is a fact that Invention of computer has miraculously changed the whole scenario. Computers not only impinged on global economy by increasing production, enhancing efficiency etc. Along with business sectors like banking, stock exchange etc, which witness extensive use of computers, other sectors have also been influenced by computers. Educational institutions, hospitals, etc are now day's increasingly using computers. Due to their vast facilities of computers are becoming more and more popular among house holds also. Increasing number of people are using computers in their day to day life. Thus, the demand of internet would be high and added with refreshments the project is a sure success.

Use of slang

Reflections

In the context of slang, it can be stated that we all use slang up to some degree and the use of slang is also considered to be representative of one's cultural identity. This concept of slang has however, changed due to urbanization, immigration and mass communication. I feel that Slang has permeated modern life as its popularity can be judged from newspaper headlines, advertisements, television scripts and stump speeches. When slang is introduced in a speech, it automatically entails a subtext apart from the main text message. In the present context, slang may be considered as a powerful and vivid representation of the tribe identity. In fact, American slang has now given rise to a global culture.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

The primary social function of slang is to signal a sense of belongingness. Knowledge of the American slang identifies the speaker as a member of that global youth culture. The impact of slang on the culture of a community can well be perceived from the fact that it has assumed the status of a global code for the youth. Nowadays, the youth have easy access to the media where they log in as members of different fan communities. It is in the same way that American English and related resources have now become a global code of communication for youth across the length and breadth of the globe.

Description of Concrete Experience

I do not know about the others but I used quite a bit during my early youth. I used it because this creates a commonality among youth across the globe whereby they share a common culture. I felt it was a form of identity creation during my early youth.

Testing and Application

American slang has important global implications in the youth-cultural contexts. Rather, it is transmitted via rapid linguistic transfer that cannot be encompassed within the curriculum. However, knowledge of slang has various positive implications as well. It also serves the distinctive purpose of relating foreign language learning with adolescent cultural experience.

Expansion/limiting vocabulary

Reflections

Vocabulary is either limited or expanded and it is dependent on time. Thus, it is in a lifetime such changes can be observed. I believe that the mass as a whole becomes bore with a specific word and thus, to attain an extra meaning of it, either expands or reduces the application of the word. As a result, the phenomenon of expansion or reduction of vocabulary takes place.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

Fundamentally, this realization made me understand that a word undergoes two basic types of meaning change- *generalization* and *specialization*. Generalization, also known as extension, refers to the assigning of a meaning to a word which is broader than its original meaning. E.g. the word 'place' derives from the Latin word 'platea' which means "broad street". Gradually, the word came to be used in a wider context as referring to "a particular place", "a business area" etc. Now, the word has undergone further expansion in meaning as it refers to "an area". Generalization is a natural process resulting from the situations where the speaker has a limited vocabulary at his/her disposal or is in the process of second language acquisition.

Specialization, on the other hand, is contrary to the process of generalization. It may be defined as the process of narrowing the meaning of the word so that it refers to something which is just an aspect of what it originally stood for. An appropriate example in this context is the Japanese word "koto" which originally referred to "any kind of stringed instrument". I also found it very interesting in the context of the relation between language and culture is the limiting or expansion of vocabulary. It has often been argued whether limiting or expanding the vocabulary creates a direct impact on the thought process and thereby affects the culture.

Description of Concrete Experience

I have seen in my experience that there is a constant change in language in terms of expansion of meaning of word or its gradual limitation. On a personal note, it can be stated that the some words that I used during my early days do not carry the same meaning today.

Testing and Application

I have talked with many experts on this parameter and I found that it has mostly been agreed upon that limiting or expanding the vocabulary may not directly influence the thought process as it operates independently. But, the limiting/expansion of vocabulary definitely affect the mode of expression of the people. As has been already mentioned, language embodies the cultural reality. Language conforms to the mode of expression of the people. Thus, the limiting/expansion of vocabulary definitely influence the culture of the community.

Changes in meaning of language and idiomatic expressions

Reflections

Idioms used in the language also reflect a particular culture and if we study our surroundings we would definitely realize that. The reason for this is not difficult to comprehend. As idioms are culture specific, they are mostly used in the local context. They can rarely be universalized. Nevertheless, there are some idioms that are more universal in their meaning and can be translated. Idioms are related to the language in the sense that

they embody the style and form of the specific language. But, their meanings cannot be deduced from the grammatical rules or the elements constituting them.

Their meanings can mostly be deciphered in their cultural contexts. Another interesting feature of idioms is that like language, these do not undergo overall modification. With time, some idioms gain in importance while some lose their significance and become obsolete. But these do not change. There are also situations where over-exaggeration of meanings has given birth to new idioms.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

However, change in the meanings of a language or semantic change can be viewed as a natural process of change unlike the idioms which are more or less stable. The meaning associated with a particular word may change from language to language, culture to culture. The same word may conjure up different images depending on the culture of the speaker. Thus, change in the meanings of a word is culture specific. While in Japan, few years back, I realized that the word ‘coffee’ is used irrespective of the temperature at which it is served whereas in England, the term refers only to hot coffee.

Description of Concrete Experience

We all use idiom and I use it quite frequently. The word ‘paparazzi’ is such an idiom that I have seen to flourish in the context of ‘yellow journalism’ lately. The death of Princess Diana ignited this Italian word and now I find it is used very frequently whenever one is dissatisfied with the approach of an intruding journalist.

Testing and Application

We can deduce that there are elements of stability and change in the making of identities. Ideas of ‘common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group or ideal may be seen as constituting a stabilizing factor in the processes of identification and the development of identities. The persistence of the biological trace in discourses of race becomes the site of contestation between super-ordinate and subaltern groups, with elements among both groups critiquing and/or clinging to it. This leads to adjustments in the functioning of the biological trait in racial discourse and classification.

Some among both groups accept, or contest, the resultant adjustments to the functioning of the biological trace in the identification and definition of racial groups. Members of super-ordinate groups may come to consider their institutional responses to the agency of subaltern groups in two ways: as positive fundamental changes or the making of too many concessions. Dependent on the biological trait as a mobilizational tool, some elements among subaltern groups also find themselves at a loss as to how to conduct the politics of race relations without the guarantee of a presumed racial solidarity. There is no guarantee that being a victim, by race or by class, automatically inclines one to the ‘correct’ politics.

Impact of advertising

Reflections

The above discussion would remain incomplete without referring to the impact of advertisement on culture. It is a part and parcel of our daily life and I have taken great interest in this subject. Most of the ads create artificial needs and demands of the community. But, to convince the audience into believing what it preaches, it often exploits the basic human desires which have often proved harmful. Most of the people declare that they are not influenced by the recent spate of advertisements. But, it may not be the reality.

Generalizations / Principles / Theories

Advertisements may appear silly, funny or trivial. But, they often create a mindset which has a serious bearing on human relationships. Most of the advertisements present the human life as dull and boring with values like trust, faith and belief in relationships fast depleting from the society. The constant bombardment of these messages often makes audience more cynical about human relationships.

They start believing that loyalty to brands is far easier than commitment in relationships. Another harmful message conveyed by advertisements is the projection of human bodies as mere objects. Just as objects need to be perfect, human bodies must also achieve the perfection projected in these ads via the use of varied products. Here, the concept of self-image suffers a change for the worse. Young girls especially become obsessed with their bodies and often suffer mental agony and frustration as they try to perfect them.

Advertisements have no doubt, brought about a boom in the consumer industry as it encourages the people to seek their own identity as well as fulfill their artificial needs and requirements through the purchase of products and services. Moreover, they also offer a wide range from where to select. Nowadays, it is nothing very strange to hear people finding solace by indulging in the purchase of products and services rather than in the human relationships. There are various situations where excessive faith in the promises offered by the products via advertisements has suffered a setback. This has often created severe disappointments.

Description of Concrete Experience

My experience suggests that advertisement may be looked upon as a means of communication which has an element of persuasiveness in it. It involves the promotion of brands or products with emphasis on how the users are going to benefit from them. It also possesses the power to convince a larger section of the society into taking up an action for a particular cause. I have seen that advertisements have a greater impact on the culture and society at large.

Testing and Application

Thus, I feel, and my feelings can be backed by my own experience that advertisements, in this process not only objectify human beings but also create a class of people addicted to certain products or brands. This addiction is far more serious than drug addiction as it gets constant encouragement from the mass media hailing them as the ideal consumers. According to many experts I have corresponded with, advertisements serve the purpose of a mirror reflecting the values of a society rather than affecting them. However, in most of the cases, it remains a pervasive medium of persuasion and propaganda.

Repeated exposure to advertisements creates a cumulative impact on the culture of a community which is often at the sub-conscious level. Many compare the role of advertisements in modern society to the role and function of myth in ancient society. They serve the dual role of the creation and perpetuation of dominant values in the modern society. And it is on the basis of these values that people conduct themselves within the society. In other words, it lays down the social norms. Advertisements can, thus be looked upon as reflecting certain values while suppressing others.

The Role of Mass Media in Shaping People's Cultural Identity

INTRODUCTION

Mass media play an important role in the introduction of new cultures to society through various methods. One approach involves presenting content related to minority cultures, allowing individuals to confront diverse aspects of cultures and traditions, thus facilitating the preservation of these cultures [1]. In addition, mass media serve as a medium for intra-group

cultural discussions, allowing society to determine which cultural elements should be upheld or appropriated, thus promoting cultural exchange and understanding [2].

By displaying diverse cultural perspectives and traditions, mass media contribute to enhancing individuals' understanding and appreciation of different cultural heritages, ultimately nurturing intercultural dialogue and understanding. Misrepresentation and underrepresentation of racial and ethnic groups in mass media have the potential to perpetuate negative stereotypes and offer limited portrayals, thus impacting self-perceptions and intergroup relationships [3]. An important illustration of this phenomenon is the portrayal of black and Latino communities in stereotypical and unfavorable roles across multiple media platforms, which contributes to the preservation of pernicious misconceptions and reduces their visibility to a wider audience [4]. In addition, depictions of substance abuse in mass media content can shape attitudes toward drugs and behavior, especially among younger audiences who often perceive celebrities as influential figures[5]. These representations not only influence self-perception, behavior, and achievement but also play a role in exacerbating tensions between different social groups and upholding institutional practices that hinder opportunities and resources for marginalized communities.

Dynamics of interaction between mass media and individual cultural identity in the process of identity construction

The intricacies of the relationship between mass media and individual cultural identity in the process of identity formation are complex and impactful. The role of mass media in shaping cultural identity through the manipulation of symbols and their dissemination in society [6]. In addition, electronic media, play an important role in self-modification by engaging in dialogical constructs and interacting with diverse representations. In addition, it highlights the importance of media discourse in building alternative narratives, shaping public opinion, and impacting intergroup relationships, ultimately influencing identity development. A deep understanding of these dynamics requires examining the interactions between media representations, cultural identities, and the construction of self and unity, as evident across the contexts provided [7].

Mass media has a dual function in reinforcing global cultural homogenization or supporting local cultural diversity. The potential Americanization of non-American content due to the presence of worldwide platforms such as Netflix could lead to cultural homogenization [8]. Conversely, platforms like Deedo, a Pan-African music streaming service, can increase the visibility of local artists and nurture cultural diversity. Local media, despite facing obstacles, have great significance in society and are valued for their coverage of local issues. Media efforts aimed at improving intercultural relations and advocating multicultural beliefs can also help in promoting local cultural diversity. As a result, mass media's influence on cultural homogenization as opposed to diversity relies on a balance between global impact and local initiatives, underscoring the complicated interplay between media platforms and cultural depictions [9].

Government intervention in mass media content can have a major influence on cultural

portrayals within the media sphere. Guidelines, such as requirements for a certain percentage of local content or certain linguistic mandates such as a 40 percent quota for French music on radio stations in France [10], implemented with the aim of maintaining and fostering cultural diversity. However, such regulatory measures may result in unintended impacts. One potential consequence is that content designed to enrich a particular program may inadvertently reduce the program's audience. In addition, regulations have the capacity to shape decisions made by broadcasting stations regarding their programming, directing appropriate stations to broadcast content more similar to non-conforming stations. In essence, government policies take an important role in shaping the cultural terrain of the media industry by influencing the creation, dissemination, and consumption of content, thereby ultimately influencing cultural representation in the media.

Media literacy helps people understand the influence of mass media on cultural identity

Media literacy plays an important role in assisting individuals in understanding the impact of mass media on their cultural identity. Studies show that initiatives in media literacy empower individuals to recognize high-quality journalism, avoid clickbait, discriminate against false information, and confront propaganda and disinformation. Research has shown that increasing levels of media literacy expertise have a positive influence on critical thinking and acceptance of cultural diversity among media consumers. In addition, adolescent-centered examinations reveal that education in media literacy results in a deeper understanding of how media shapes decision-making processes, especially in relation to sexual representation, and increases the capacity to resist peer influence, thus shaping attitudes towards abstinence. Through improved media literacy competencies, individuals can be more adept at navigating the realm of mass media, critically analyzing information, and gaining deeper insight into the function of media in shaping and reflecting culture [11].

Public awareness of cultural diversity can reduce the influence of mass media homogenization

Public awareness of cultural diversity can indeed help in reducing the impact of mass media homogenization. By actively participating in raising public awareness of the risks associated with language and advocating a shift in global perspectives in favor of language variation, linguists can take an important role in this effort. In addition, approaches such as engaging in intercultural listening activities have been shown to increase students' cultural awareness and readiness for intercultural dialogue, thus contributing to a more diverse and all-encompassing society [12]. Recognizing and appreciating differences and similarities among diverse cultures is essential to fostering an environment in which individuals accept and value cultural diversity, going beyond mere tolerance of authentic admiration and recognition of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Ultimately, constructive views of a linguistically and culturally varied world, combined with active engagement from communities, especially young people, have the potential to offset the homogenizing influence of mass media and foster more inclusive societies [13].

The development of mass media has experienced rapid growth over time, significantly influencing society and enabling extensive communication. Various research studies emphasize how technological advancements, especially in the era of digital communication, have shaped the evolution of mass media, giving rise to new media formats and avenues of communication. The role of mass media in fostering community development, education, and information dissemination, particularly in remote and less developed areas, has been widely recognized. Its impact on social interaction, educational strategies, and information transmission is profound, underlining its significance in contemporary communication frameworks. In addition, the emergence of digital technologies has revolutionized the mass media landscape, encouraging the incorporation of innovative media platforms and digital ingenuity in journalism and media entities.[14]

Globalization undeniably accelerates cultural exchange on a global scale, resulting in the spread of ideas, information, and customs across international boundaries [15]. This rapid cultural exchange is enabled by contemporary global financial systems, media platforms, migration patterns, and advances in information and communication technology, all of which erode cultural differences and facilitate the spread of shared values and mainstream culture. The interconnectivity fostered by globalization not only gives rise to mixed cultural expressions but also sparks discussions regarding the influence of globalization on cultural norms and identities. Some advocate a transition towards a universal consumer culture, while others highlight a shift toward Western ideals and behaviors in advertising approaches. Despite the potential for conflict and the threat posed to local customs and identities, globalization remains in shaping an increasingly interconnected yet fragmented world, underscoring the need to understand cultural dynamics within a global framework [16].

The Influence of Mass Media Representations on Cultural Perceptions

Cultural representation in mass media remains a highly debated topic, given its potential to oversimplify or distort cultural portrayals, perpetuate negative stereotypes, and limit the presentation of diverse viewpoints. Studies show that marginalized communities, including minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals, often face misrepresentation or exclusion in media narratives, thus perpetuating damaging stereotypes and hindering societal progress. An examination of media coverage during the COVID-19 crisis illustrates how different cultural contexts can shape discourse construction, resulting in variations in the depiction and interpretation of global events. Moreover, analysis of news reporting in China shows a different approach, with one publication adopting a nationalist perspective while the other embracing multiculturalism, underscoring the influence of media practices on public perception and international discourse [17].

Mass media play an important role in shaping cultural and individual identity, exerting influence on individuals' perception of the world, their self-conception, and the development of socially critical personal attributes. Media platforms such as television and the Internet are indispensable in the process of shaping a person's personality, influencing the standards of behavior and moral principles derived from the social environment. In addition, mass media, especially through television talk shows and social networking platforms, play an important role in shaping individual identity by presenting compelling subjective images and offering avenues for self-expression and social engagement. Mass media exposure, especially through video games and movies, has been shown to have a profound impact on the hyper-reality and identity of cosplayers, encouraging them to choose characters that reflect their self-image and build communities centered around this identity [18].

Mass communication has an important role in spreading new cultural aspects to society by influencing beliefs, values, and behaviors through diverse communication channels. The interaction between mass media, society, and culture contributes to the spread of cultural standards and customs, sometimes leading to uniformity of societal principles. On occasion, mass media have played an important role in introducing previously unknown cultures to a wider audience, ultimately resulting in a global expansion of cultural beliefs and practices. Cultural infiltration through mass media can lead to the gradual erosion of local cultural heritage in less developed countries, as dominant influences determine the structure and substance of the media, forming a universal culture that can mask indigenous traditions and values. The prevalence of mass media such as newspapers, television, and popular culture has facilitated the extensive dissemination of fresh cultural components, thereby altering individual viewpoints and behaviors[19]

Sociocultural stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media play an important role in shaping an individual's perception of the culture depicted. These stereotypes, often perpetuated through the creation and dissemination of media content, have the potential to create a single narrative that sustains unfavorable perceptions and limits marginalized communities, affecting their self-image, behavior, and achievements. The spread and dissemination of sociocultural stereotypes through media discourse can influence people's beliefs and standards, influencing how people perceive different cultural factions. In addition, selective consumption of entertainment media aligned with existing beliefs can inhibit exposure to depictions that challenge harmful stereotypes, thereby hindering the widespread reduction of those stereotypes. Particularly in advertising, gender stereotypes promoted in mass media can enforce and propagate rigid gender norms, which requires increased regulation to effectively counteract these stereotypes. Exposure to stereotypes, objectification, and sexual depictions in the media can reinforce gender bias, promote sexism, harassment, and aggression, and have a devastating impact on an individual's physical and mental well-being[20].

Public Awareness of Cultural Diversity and Its Effects on Mass Media

Public recognition of cultural diversity can exert an important influence on the content produced by mass media. The scholarship underscores the importance of presenting cultural information in a way accessible to journalists and students to enhance media coverage of matters related to diversity. The media's function in reflecting and shaping individual perspectives on diversity is crucial, where media editorial guidelines and journalists' personal awareness play an important role in coverage of diverse subjects. While integrating media through shared values is essential, excessive emphasis on certain issues or overly diverse coverage can result in regulation, censorship, or audience segmentation, underscoring the delicate

balance necessary for a diverse society. In addition, the dynamics between mass media and audiences in the production and reception process can foster a common understanding that increases the maturity of both parties regarding their functions and roles in society. Ultimately, addressing awareness of cultural diversity can result in more inclusive and appropriate portrayals of diverse communities and issues in the media, thus contributing to a more harmonious and well-informed society[21].

Residents are actively engaged in advocating for more precise and comprehensive portrayals of culture in mainstream media, with the aim of challenging harmful stereotypes and advancing social equality. This vocation is motivated by the recognition of the visual and linguistic influence of media in shaping perspectives and influencing societal standards. The rise of virtual worlds like social media has allowed historically marginalized voices to come together, contribute, and fight for social justice, underscoring the importance of multiple viewpoints in media content creation. Furthermore, the examination of inclusivity in Indian mass media underscores the importance of public engagement in shaping media portrayals and nurturing a sense of community within the country. In essence, community engagement in calling for accurate and inclusive cultural representation in mainstream media is critical to promoting diversity, justice, and social unity[22].

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

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Week-8

Gender and Language

The study of gender and language in sociolinguistics and [gender studies](#) is often said to have begun with [Robin Lakoff](#)'s 1975 book, *Language and Woman's Place*, as well as some earlier studies by Lakoff.^[5] The study of language and gender has developed greatly since the 1970s. Prominent scholars include [Deborah Tannen](#), [Penelope Eckert](#), [Janet Holmes](#), [Mary Bucholtz](#), [Kira Hall](#), [Deborah Cameron](#), [Jane Sunderland](#) and others. The 1995 edited volume *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*^[6] is often referred to as a central text on language and gender.^[7]

History and development of the field^[edit]

The early studies on the notion of language and gender are combined into the fields of [linguistics](#), [feminist theory](#), and political practice.^[8] The feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s started to research on the relationship between language and gender. These researches were related to the [women's liberation movement](#), and their goal was to discover

the linkage between language usage and gender asymmetries. Since, feminists have been working on the ways that language is maintaining the existing [patriarchy](#) and [sexism](#).^[3]

Difference/Deficit models (1970s)

Early work on language and gender began by noticing ways in which women's language deviated from the presumed default, or men's, language practices. In 1975 Robin Lakoff identified a "women's register", which she argued served to maintain women's (inferior) role in society.^[9] Lakoff argued that women tend to use linguistic forms that reflect and reinforce a subordinate role. These include [tag questions](#), [question intonation](#), and "weak" [directives](#), among others (see also [Speech practices associated with gender](#), below).^[10]

Another early approach was the **deficit** model, which defines adult male language as the standard, and women's language as deficient.^[12] This approach created a dichotomy between women's language and men's language. This triggered criticism to the approach in that highlighting issues in women's language by using men's as a benchmark. As such, women's language was considered to have something inherently 'wrong' with it. Studies such as Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* have been labeled the "deficit approach", since they posit that one gender is deficient in terms of the other. Descriptions of women's speech as deficient can actually be dated as far back as [Otto Jespersen's](#) "The Woman", a chapter in his 1922 book *Language: Its Nature and Development, and Origin*.^[12] While later work has problematized Jespersen's view of women as inferior, of the chapter's language from a modern perspective, Jespersen's contributions about the prospect of language change based on social and gendered opportunity, lexical and phonological differences, and the idea of genderlects and gender roles influence language remain relevant. One refinement of the deficit argument is the so-called "dominance approach", which posits that gender differences in language reflect power differences in society.^[13]

Dual Culture and Dominance Models (1980-1990s)

Dual Cultures is an approach of equality, differentiating men and women as belonging to different 'sub-cultures' as they have been socialized to do so since childhood. This then results in the varying communicative styles of men and women. Deborah Tannen is a major advocate of this position.^[14] Tannen compares gender differences in language to cultural differences. Comparing conversational goals, she argues that men tend to use a "report style", aiming to communicate factual information, whereas women more often use a "rapport style", which is more concerned with building and maintaining relationships.^[14] Scholars including Tannen and others argue that differences are pervasive across media, including face-to-face conversation,^{[15][16]} written essays of primary school children,^[17] email,^[18] and even toilet graffiti.^[19]

Dominance is an approach whereby women are seen as the subordinate group whose difference in style of speech results from male supremacy and also possibly an effect of patriarchy. This results in a primarily male-centered language. Scholars such as Dale Spender^[20] and Don Zimmerman and Candace West^[21] subscribe to this view. One of the most outstanding sentiments in these studies is the concept of power. Researchers have been trying to understand the patterns of language to show how it can reflect the power imbalance in society. Some of them believe that men have social advantages which can be seen in the men's usage of language. Also, some of them think that there are women's disadvantages in society which are reflected in language.^[8] For example, some feminist language researchers have tried to find how the advantages of men had manifested in language. They argue how, in the past, philosophers, politicians, grammarians, linguists, and others were men who have had control over language, so they entered their sexist thoughts in it as a means to regulate their domination.^[22]

Some scholars problematize both the dominance and the dual cultures approach. Deborah Cameron notes that throughout the history of scholarship on language and gender male-associated forms have been seen as the [unmarked norm](#) from which the female deviates.^[23] For example, the norm 'manager' becomes the marked form 'manageress' when

referring to a female counterpart. On the other hand, Cameron argues that what the difference approach labels as different ways of using or understanding language are actually displays of differential power. Cameron suggests, "It is comforting to be told that nobody needs to 'feel awful': that there are no real conflicts, only misunderstandings. ... But the research evidence does not support the claims made by Tannen and others about the nature, the causes, and the prevalence of male-female miscommunication."^[24] She argues that social differences between men's and women's roles are not clearly reflected in language use. One additional example is a study she has done on call center operators in the UK, where these operators are trained to be scripted in what they say and to perform the necessary '[emotional labor](#)' (smiling, expressive intonation, showing rapport/empathy and giving minimal responses) for their customer-callers. This emotional labor is commonly associated with the feminine domain, and the call center service workers are also typically women. However, the men working in this call center do not orient to the covertly gendered meanings when they are tasked to perform this emotional labor. While this does not mean that the 'woman's language' is revalued, nor does this necessarily call for a feminist celebration, Cameron highlights that it is possible that with time, more men may work in this service industry, and this may lead to a subsequent "de-gendering" of this linguistic style.^[25]

Social Constructionist Models (2000)

The "**dynamic**" or "[social constructionist](#)" approach is the most current approach to language and gender. Instead of speech falling into a natural gendered category, the dynamic nature and multiple factors of an interaction help a socially appropriate gendered construct. As such, West and Zimmerman describe these constructs as "[doing gender](#)" instead of the speech itself necessarily being classified in a particular category.^[26] This is to say that these social constructs, while affiliated with particular genders, can be utilized by speakers as they see fit.

Communication styles are always a product of context, and as such, gender differences tend to be most pronounced in single-gender groups. One explanation for this, is that people [accommodate](#) their language towards the style of the person they are interacting with. Thus, in a mixed-gender group, gender differences tend to be less pronounced. A similarly important observation is that this accommodation is usually towards the language style, not the gender of the person. That is, a polite and empathic man will tend to be accommodated to on the basis of their being polite and empathic, rather than their being a man.^[27]

However, Ochs argues that gender can be indexed directly and indirectly.^[28] Direct indexicality is the primary relationship between linguistics resources (such as lexicon, morphology, syntax, phonology, dialect and language) and gender. For example, the pronouns "he" and "she" directly indexes "male" and "female". However, there can be a secondary relationship between linguistic resources and gender where the linguistic resources can index certain acts, activities or stances which then indirectly index gender. In other words, these linguistic resources help constitute gender. Examples include the Japanese particles "wa" and "ze". The former directly index delicate intensity, which then indirectly indexes the female "voice" while the latter directly indexes coarse intensity, which then indirectly indexes the male "voice".

Language and power

In the past, many feminist language researchers used to believe that power is something separate from the language, which helps powerful groups, for example, men, to dominate the way language is being produced and used in society.^[8] Nowadays, some researchers consider that power is embedded in the language structures rather than being outside of it.^[8] For instance, the language of science helps to regulate the ideas of the dominant groups in it, which can never be completely neutral.^[29] Even in psychology, the interpretations of gender had always some benefits for the academics who were writing about it, so it was always important that who is using the language and how they are using it to explain something.^[29]

The norms of appropriate ways of talking for different genders are an example of the concept of power in language.^[8] There are many social forces to determine the ways different genders are supposed to communicate with each other.^[8] As these norms are the results of the present [hierarchy](#) in society, doubting them leads to challenging the social orders which originate these patterns.^[8] Many studies in this field presume that there are gender differences in language use; therefore, they examine how different genders vary in their speech styles. However, This approach does not incorporate the debate that who, initially, decided to set these differences and norms, and why these norms are generally accepted.^[8] "Language is a complex and dynamic system that produces meaning about social categories such as gender".^[8] In this sense, power is not something outside this system, but it is a part of it.^[8]

The notion of gender is not static. Rather, this notion varies from culture to culture and time to time.^[8] "[Feminine](#)" and "[masculine](#)" are socially constructed concepts that through a set of repeated acts, have become natural.^[3] [Simone de Beauvoir](#)'s famous dictum manifests this idea: "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman."^[30] Accordingly, performing acts following social norms leads to the phenomenon of gendered speech. As femininity and masculinity are not fixed concepts, their style of talking can also be as a result of power relations in society regulating social standards.^[3]

In each society, the notion of gender is being learned from early childhood through conversation, humor, parenting, institutions, media, and other ways of imparting knowledge. Hence, gender seems a natural and even scientific concept to all the individuals of a society. Many scholars have been trying to not only find the truth behind this common sense but also understand why this concept is taking for granted. This kind of research requires to question some underlying assumptions about gender, and approach this concept from a different point of view.^[31] Gender is not something people born with, but people learn to perform and act based on the expected norms of it, which has nothing to do with physiology and hormones.^[32]

In the matter of linguistic competence- the ability to produce knowledge and understand it via language-, sociolinguistics and linguist anthropologists believe that only knowledge of structure and morphology cannot help a person to communicate with others. Instead, they think that one needs to know the social norms people use in different languages in order to interact with them. People gradually learn how to use language in specific social situations and develop communicative competence. Therefore, language and social norms are dynamic and interconnected. As people use language in respect to these norms, it plays a vital role in manifesting and sustaining social standards^[31] and can be a tool for reproducing power relations and gender oppression.^[33] One of the examples to show this interconnection would be the fact that there is no equivalent for "sir" to use in addressing a female [authority](#). This fact cannot be related to the language itself, but it is correlated to the perception that authorities have always been male.^[31] The other example is the way women get addressed by [Miss](#), [Mrs.](#), or [Ms.](#), while Men are only addressed by [Mr.](#), which is a term that shows their [gender](#), not [marital status](#). Unlike men, women's relationships can affect their [social status](#), and they can be judged and qualified based on it.^[3]

Language practices associated with gender

Not all members of a particular gender may follow the specific gender roles that are prescribed by society.^[34] Scholars of language and gender are often interested in patterns of gendered communication, and these patterns are described below, however, not every member of that gender may fit into those patterns.

Minimal responses

One of the ways in which the communicative behaviors of men and women differ is in their use of minimal responses, i.e., [paralinguistic](#) features such as 'mm' and 'yeah', which is behaviour associated with collaborative language use.^[35] Men generally use them less

frequently than women, and when they do, it is usually to show agreement, as Don The Zimmerman and Candace West's study of [turn-taking](#) in conversation indicates.^[36]

While the above can be true in some contexts and situations, studies that dichotomize the communicative behavior of men and women may run the risk of over-generalization. For example, "minimal responses appearing "throughout streams of talk", such as "mm" or "yeah", may only function to display active listening and interest and are not always signs of "support work", as Fishman claims. They can—as more detailed analysis of minimal responses show—signal understanding, demonstrate agreement, indicate scepticism or a critical attitude, demand clarification or show surprise.^[37] In other words, both male and female participants in a conversation can employ these minimal responses for interactive functions, rather than gender-specific functions.

Questions

Some research has argued that men and women differ in their use of questions in conversations. For men, a question is usually a genuine request for information whereas with women it can often be a rhetorical means of engaging the other's conversational contribution or of acquiring attention from others conversationally involved, techniques associated with a collaborative approach to language use.^[38] Therefore, women use questions more frequently.^{[15][39]} However, a study carried out by Alice Freed and Alice Greenwood in 1996 showed that there was no significant difference in the use of questions, such as "you know?" between genders.^[40] In writing, however, both genders use rhetorical questions as literary devices. For example, Mark Twain used them in "[The War Prayer](#)" to provoke the reader to question his actions and beliefs. Tag questions are frequently used to verify or confirm information, though in women's language they may also be used to avoid making strong statements.^[9]

Turn-taking

As the work of Victoria DeFrancisco shows, female linguistic behaviour characteristically encompasses a desire to take turns in conversation with others, which is opposed to men's tendency towards centering on their own point or remaining silent when presented with such implicit offers of conversational turn-taking as are provided by [hedges](#) such as "y' know" and "isn't it".^[41] This desire for turn-taking gives rise to complex forms of interaction in relation to the more regimented form of turn-taking commonly exhibited by men.^[42]

Changing the topic of conversation

According to Bruce Dorval in his study of same-sex friend interaction, males tend to change subject more frequently than females.^[43] This difference may well be at the root of the conception that women chatter and talk too much. Goodwin observes that girls and women link their utterances to previous speakers and develop each other's topics, rather than introducing new topics.^[44]

However, a study of young American couples and their interactions reveal that while women raise twice as many topics as men, it is the men's topics that are usually taken up and subsequently elaborated in the conversation.^[37]

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is not simply providing information to another person. Instead, scholars define self-disclosure as sharing information with others that they would not normally know or discover. Self-disclosure involves risk and vulnerability on the part of the person sharing the information.^[45] Deborah Tannen's work argues that men and women have different views of self-disclosure, that women have a tendency toward [self-disclosure](#), i.e., sharing their problems and experiences with others, often to offer sympathy,^[46] which contrasts with men's tendencies to non-self disclosure and professing advice or offering a solution when confronted with another's problems.^[14]

Research has been conducted to examine whether self-disclosure in adult friendship differs according to gender and marital status. Sixty-seven women and fifty-three men were asked

about intimate and non-intimate self-disclosure to closest same-sex friends. Disclosure to spouse among married respondents was also assessed. Married people's non-intimate disclosure to friends was lower than that of unmarried people, regardless of gender. Married people's intimate disclosure to their spouses was high regardless of gender; in comparison, married men's intimate disclosure to their friends was low, while married women's disclosure to their friends was moderate or even as high as disclosure to their spouses. The results suggest that gender roles are not the only determinant of gender differences in disclosure to friends. Marital status appears to have an important influence on disclosure in friendship for men but not for women. It was concluded that research on gender differences in self-disclosure and friendship has neglected an important variable, that of marital status.^[47]

While there are some gendered stereotypes and expectations about self-disclosure, other research shows that people have the ability to still self disclose very clearly regardless of masculine or feminine communication traits. "Sex consistently failed to predict subjects' willingness to self-disclose, both within and across contexts, whereas femininity promoted self-disclosure in the context that was clearly social and expressive in character. Although masculinity failed to exert the expected facilitative impact on self-disclosure within the instrumental context, it nonetheless influenced the results; androgynous subjects, who scored high in both masculinity and femininity, were more self-revealing across contexts than was any other group."^[48]

Self-disclosure has also been researched within the context of heterosexual couples,^[49] as self-disclosure is considered to be a key factor in facilitating intimacy. For example, American heterosexual couples were studied using various measures twice a year. By using the average scores of both partners, they found that self-disclosure was higher in those couples who remained together at the second administration of the surveys than in those who broke up between two administrations. Similarly, researchers asked heterosexual couples who had just begun dating to complete a self-disclosure measure and to answer the same questionnaire four months later. They found that couples who were still dating four months later reported greater self-disclosure at the initial contact than did those who later broke up.^[50] This work shows self-disclosure can be beneficial to facilitating a positive relationship.

Verbal aggression

Aggression can be defined by its three intersecting counterparts: indirect, relational and social. Indirect aggression occurs when the victim is attacked through covert and concealed attempts to cause social suffering. Examples are gossiping, exclusion or ignoring of the victim. Relational aggression, while similar to indirect, is more resolute in its intentions. It can be a threat to terminate a friendship or spreading false rumors. The third type of aggression, social aggression, "is directed toward damaging another's self-esteem, social status, or both, and may take direct forms such as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion."^[51] This third type has become more common in adolescent, both male and female, behavior.^[52]

Dr. M.K. Underwood, leading researcher in child clinical psychology and developmental psychology, began using the term social aggression in several of her experiments.^[53] In one study, Underwood followed 250 third-graders and their families in order to understand how anger is communicated in relationships, especially in face-to-face and behind-the-back situations. It was found that technology and electronic communication has become a key factor in social aggression. This discovery has been termed cyber-bullying. In another experiment, social aggression was used to see if verbal and nonverbal behaviors contributed to a person's social value.^[54] It was found that those who communicated nonverbal signals were seen as angry and annoyed by their peers. In a third study, the experimenters determined that while socially aggressive students were vastly disliked, they were alleged to be the popular kids and had the highest marked social status. Most research has been based on teacher assessments, case studies and surveys.

The For years, all research on aggression focused primarily on males because it was believed females were non-confrontational. Recently however, people have realized that while "boys tend to be more overtly and physically aggressive, girls are more indirectly, socially, and relationally aggressive."^[52] In a study done measuring cartoon character's aggressive acts on television, these statistics were found:^[54]

- 76.9% of physical aggression was committed by male characters
- 23.1% of physical aggression was committed by female characters
- 37.2% of social aggression was committed by male characters
- 62.8% of social aggression was committed by female characters

Listening and attentiveness

In a conversation, meaning does not reside in the words spoken, but is filled in by the person listening. Each person decides if they think others are speaking in the spirit of differing status or symmetrical connection. The likelihood that individuals will tend to interpret someone else's words as one or the other depends more on the hearer's own focus, concerns, and habits than on the spirit in which the words were intended.^[14]

It appears that women attach more weight than men to the importance of [listening](#) in conversation, with its connotations of power to the listener as confidant of the speaker. This attachment of import by women to listening is inferred by women's normally lower rate of interruption – i.e., disrupting the flow of conversation with a topic unrelated to the previous one^[55] – and by their largely increased use of minimal responses in relation to men.^[36] Men, however, interrupt far more frequently with non-related topics, especially in the mixed sex setting and, far from rendering a female speaker's responses minimal, are apt to greet her conversational spotlights with silence, as the work of Victoria DeFrancisco demonstrates.^[41]

When men talk, women listen and agree. However men tend to misinterpret this agreement, which was intended in a spirit of connection, as a reflection of status and power. A man might conclude that a woman is indecisive or insecure as a result of her listening and attempts of acknowledgment. When in all actuality, a woman's reasons for behaving this way have nothing to do with her attitudes toward her knowledge, but are a result of her attitudes toward her relationships. The act of giving information frames the speaker with a higher status, while the act of listening frames the listener as lower. However, when women listen to men, they are not necessarily thinking in terms of status, but in terms of connection and support.^[14]

Heterosexual relationships

As described [above](#), there are certain stereotypes society places on the way men and women communicate. Men are stereotyped to be more of a public speaker and leader, while women are stereotyped to talk more in private among their family and friends. For women, society views their use of communication as a way to express feelings and emotions. For men, society views their use of communication as a way to express power and negotiate status among other individuals.^[14] There are also certain societal stereotypes about how men and women communicate within a heterosexual marriage or relationship. When a man and a woman are communicating within their relationship, the traditional language roles are altered. The man becomes more passive and the woman becomes more active. A man's stereotypical silent communication style is often disappointing for women, while a woman's emotionally articulate communication style is often seen as aggravating for a man.^[14] This creates the assumption that women and men have opposing communication styles, therefore creating society's cliché that men and women don't understand each other.

Dominance versus subjection

This, in turn, suggests a dichotomy between a male desire for conversational dominance – noted by Helena Leet-Pellegrini with reference to male experts speaking more verbosely than their female counterparts – and a female aspiration to group conversational participation.^[56] One corollary of this is, according to Jennifer Coates, that males are afforded more attention in the context of the classroom and that this can lead to their gaining more

attention in scientific and technical subjects, which in turn can lead to their achieving better success in those areas, ultimately leading to their having more power in a technocratic society.^[57]

Conversation is not the only area where power is an important aspect of the male/female dynamic. Power is reflected in every aspect of communication from what the actual topic of the communication, to the ways in which it is communicated. Women are typically less concerned with power and more concerned with forming and maintaining relationships, whereas men are more concerned with their status. Girls and women feel it is crucial that they be liked by their peers, a form of involvement that focuses on symmetrical connection. Boys and men feel it is crucial that they be respected by their peers, as form of involvement that focuses on asymmetrical status.^[58] These differences in priorities are reflected in the ways in which men and women communicate. A woman's communication will tend to be more focused on building and maintaining relationships. Men on the other hand, will place a higher priority on power, their communication styles will reflect their desire to maintain their status in the relationship.

According to Tannen's research, men tend to tell stories as another way to maintain their status. Primarily, men tell jokes, or stories that focus on themselves. Women on the other hand, are less concerned with their own power, and therefore their stories revolve not around themselves, but around others. By putting themselves on the same level as those around them, women attempt to downplay their part in their own stories, which strengthens their connections to those around them.

Politeness

Lakoff identified three forms of politeness: formal, deference, and camaraderie. Women's language is characterized by formal and deference politeness, whereas men's language is exemplified by camaraderie.^[9]

There is a generalization about conservativeness and politeness in women's speech. It is commonly believed that women are gentle, while men are rough and rude. Since there is no evidence for the total accuracy of this perception, researchers have tried to examine the reasons behind it. Statistics show a pattern that women tend to use more "standard" variable of the language.^[59] For example, in the case of negative concord, e.g., I didn't do anything vs. I didn't do nothing, women usually use the standard form.^[3] Pierre Bourdieu introduced the concept of the linguistic marketplace. According to this concept, different varieties of language have different values. When people want to be accepted in a diplomatic organization, they need to have a range of knowledge to show their competency. Possessing the right language is as important as the right style of dress. Both of these manners have social values.^[60] While Bourdieu focuses on the diplomatic corps, it would be true if people want to be accepted in other contexts such as an urban ghetto. The market that one wants to engage with has a profound effect on the value of the variation of language they may use.^[61] The relations of each gender to linguistic markets are different. A research on the pronunciation of English in Norwich has shown that women's usage is considerably more conservative regarding the standard variation of the language they speak. This research provides the pieces of evidence that women's exclusion from the workplace has led to this variation.^[62] As women in some cases have not had the same position as men and their opportunities to secure these positions have been fewer, they have tried to use more "valuable" variations of the language. It can be the standard one, or the polite version of it, or the so-called "right" one.^[3]

Children's television

A specific area of study within the field of language and gender is the way in which it affects [children's television](#). Mulac et al.'s *"Male/Female Language Differences and Attributional Consequences in Children's Television"* focuses on identifying differing speech patterns of male versus female characters in popular children's television programs at the time (the 1980s).^[63] The data gathered by Mulac et al. comes from a two-week period in 1982

from three [Public Broadcasting Service](#) daytime programs and three categories from [commercial network programs](#) (action, comedy/adventure, and commercials) that aired on Saturdays. They analyzed randomly selected interactive dialogue taken once from every ten minutes of their tapes. Mulac et al. collected data for 37 language variables, from which they determined the thirteen that showed significant differences between usage by male and female characters. Mulac et al.'s definitions of these thirteen features are as follows:^[63]

Vocalized Pauses	Utterance without semantic meaning (uh, um, etc.)
Verbs	(See verb page)
Uncertainty Verbs	Verb phrase that shows some level of uncertainty ('I'm not sure if...', 'It might be', etc.)
Action Verbs	Verbs that specify physical action
Present Tense Verbs	Verb phrases in the present tense, including but not limited to habitual actions and historical present
Adverbials Begin Sentence	Tells how, when, or where a sentence or phrase takes place ('Yesterday, I went to Taco Bell')
Justifiers	Gives reason/justification for a previous utterance or action
Judgmental Adjectives	Indicates a personal and subjective opinion/evaluation
Concrete Nouns	Nouns that can be perceived by one or more of the five senses
Subordinating Conjunctions	After, as soon as, until, etc. (See subordinating conjunctions)
Grammatical Errors	Utterances which are viewed incorrect by a prescriptivist grammar
Polite Forms	Utterances that express some degree of politeness

The following tended to be higher in frequency for males: vocalized pauses, action verbs, present tense verbs, justifiers, subordinating conjunctions, and grammatical "errors". On the other hand, the following were found to occur more for females: total verbs, uncertainty verbs, adverbials beginning sentences, judgmental adjectives, concrete nouns, and polite forms. In addition, female characters had longer sentences on average.^[63]

Another facet of Mulac et al.'s research was to gather participants' subjective ratings on characters' socio-intellectual status (high/low social status, white/blue collar, literate/illiterate, rich/poor), dynamism (aggressive/unaggressive, strong/weak, loud/soft, active/passive), and aesthetic quality (pleasing/displeasing, sweet/sour, nice/awful, beautiful/ugly), based on the transcripts from the shows' dialogue.^[63]

Aubrey's 2004 study "*The Gender-Role Content of Children's Favorite Television Programs and Its Links to Their Gender-Related Perceptions*" identifies gender stereotypes in children's television programs and evaluates the effects of these stereotypes on children's personal [gender-role](#) values and interpersonal attraction.^[64] Aubrey chose shows for the study based on children's responses when asked to name their favorite television program (the top-named show was [Rugrats](#), followed by [Doug](#)). Some of the stereotypes found in the study pertain to language/communication, but most are stereotypes or attributes of the characters such as assertiveness, aggression, emotionality, and cattiness.^[64] In regards to language, the study found that male characters were more likely to ask questions, assert opinions, and direct others than female characters.^[64] Female characters, on the other hand, were more likely to "receive or make comments about body or beauty" than their male counterparts.^[64]

In general, Aubrey found less stereotypical content for female characters than for male, which they recognize to be a possible effect of either the higher presence of male characters or the difficulty of measuring [passivity](#).^[64]

Transgender linguistics

While much work on language and gender has focused on the differences between people of binary genders (men and women) and [cisgender](#) people, with the rise of [social constructionist](#) models of language and gender scholarship, there has been a turn towards explorations of how individuals of all genders perform masculinity and femininity (as well as other gendered identities) through language.^[65]

Early work on transgender people's voice/language came out of speech pathology, as many transgender people undergo [specific voice therapies](#) ([voice feminization](#) for transgender women and [voice masculinization](#) for transgender men) as part of their transition.^[66] Within sociocultural linguistics, [Lal Zimman](#)'s work has been influential in developing the field of trans linguistics.^{[67][68]} Within the context of US and English-speaking trans and gender diverse communities, linguistic features at various levels, whether [phonetic](#) features (e.g., pitch and /s/ production),^{[69][70][71]} lexical items (e.g., body part names and pronouns),^{[72][73][74]} and semiotic systems (e.g., linguistic and aesthetic style),^[75] have been shown to be important resources for naming trans identities and for constructing and communicating these identities to the world. Sociophonetic research within trans communities has explored how the gendered voice is constructed, performed, and heard.^[76] Lexical analyses have shown how labels and [pronouns](#) have allowed non-normative gender individuals to claim linguistic agency over their own experience of gender as well as to challenge and reclaim pathological terminology ascribed by doctors and psychologists.^[77]

Gender-specific vocabulary

Some natural languages have intricate systems of gender-specific [vocabulary](#).

- [Irish Sign Language](#), due to single sex Deaf schools, developed separate male and female vocabularies which can still be seen today.

- Some Australian Aboriginal communities, such as the [Warlpiri](#), have [auxiliary sign languages](#) which are primarily used by older women. Men typically know a few signs, but do not sign extensively. This distinction has emerged because women observe a [speech taboo](#) during mourning and learn sign to communicate during this period, although they continue to use the language with other women even after the taboo is lifted.^[78]
- It is speculated that [Sumerian](#) women had a special language called *Emesal*, distinct from the main language, *Emegir*, which was spoken by both genders. The women's language had a distinct vocabulary, found in the records of religious rituals to be performed by women, also in the speech of goddesses in mythological texts. There has been some dispute about the role of *Emesal*, with suggestions by some scholars that *Emegir* was a dialect used by the public and more informally while *Emesal* was a literary language.^[79]
- For a significant period of time in the history of the ancient [languages of India](#), after the formal language [Sanskrit](#) diverged from the popular [Prakrit](#) languages, some Sanskrit plays recorded the speech of women in Prakrit, distinct from the Sanskrit of male speakers. This convention was also used for illiterate and low-caste male speakers.^[80]
- [Garifuna](#) has a vocabulary split between terms used only by men and terms used only by women. This does not however affect the entire vocabulary but when it does, the terms used by men generally come from [Carib](#) and those used by women come from [Arawak](#).^[citation needed]
- The indigenous Australian language [Yanyuwa](#) has separate dialects for men and women.^[81]
- In [Ancient Greek](#), there is evidence for some difference between the speech of men and women, as evidenced for example in the comedies of [Aristophanes](#).^[citation needed]
- In the [Lakota language](#), a small number of enclitics (approximately eight) differ in form based on the gender of the speaker. While many native speakers and linguists agree that certain enclitics are associated with particular genders, such usage may not be exclusive. That is, individual men sometimes use enclitics associated with women, and vice versa.^[82]

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[Language and Gender \(Sociolinguistic\) \(slideshare.net\)](#)

[Language and gender \(slideshare.net\)](#)

Language and Gender: Differences and Similarities

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Abstract

The relationship between gender and language has been studied with main focus on differences between the language of male and female from different angles with different methodologies. The research findings lay different emphasis on the differences, but there are some problems in the researches. This paper will review the previous researches into gender differences, then point

out the problems existing in methodology and research findings, and finally propose that researchers should pay more attention to the similarities between the language of both genders, the similarities play the same important part as well as differences.

Keywords: language, gender, differences, similarities

“Language and gender” refers to the relationship between the language of male and female. Gender difference is not only a reflection of the speeches between male and female, but also a reflection of their different living styles and attitudes. Gender difference is a popular research in many fields, such as in psychology, in sociolinguistics, and in female study. In these fields, the differences between male and female in many aspects have been studied from different angles with different methodologies. Though research findings lay different emphasis on the differences, there are still some similarities between them. For instance, males are more concerned with power, they desire to be leaders, while females are satisfied with their subordinate status; males speak directly and take transferring information as the first thing, but females speak indirectly, implicitly and mildly. For them, expressing feelings is very important. Many scholars have concerned about the differences between the language of male and female. To some extent, it shows that gender difference is very popular and important. This paper will focus on

gender differences and similarities. Firstly, the previous researches into gender differences are reviewed, then, some problems existing in research methodology and research findings are pointed out, and finally some suggestions are put forward that researchers should pay more attention to the similarities between the language of male and female, the similarities play the same important part as differences in research.

2. Review of the researches into gender and language

2.1. The Beginning of the research

Early in the 1970s, linguists, psychologists began to attach great importance to differences between the language of male and female, the representatives were Key, Lakoff and Thorne. The mainstream views include the deficit theory by Lakoff (1975), who considers that female language is inferior to male language, the dominance theory by Thorne(1975), who thinks female language is superior, male language is a kind of deficiency, and Cameron (2003) put forward that women are better at listening and sharing emotions with others. They put forward some terms, such as “women’s language” (Lakoff, 1973), “the female register” (Grosby and Nyquist, 1977), “genderlect” (Kramer, 1974) and “gender-related-language” (Mulac et al, 1986). The scholars use different terms to determine their research subject. No matter what angles they researched from and what methodology they used, the scholars promote the development of the research into gender differences.

The research into gender differences in the field of linguistics began with Robin Lakoff. She put forward “female language” and her book *Language and Women’s Place* published in 1973 aroused the linguists’ interests in this research topic. Lakoff points out several features of the female language in her book. (1) Specialized vocabulary. Compared with the language of

males, females often like to use more concrete color words, such as mauve, yellow, azure, beige and lavender. What's more, they prefer to some concrete words that have a close relationship with life. (2) Milder expletives. Females use expletives in a milder tone, but males often speak in a strong tone. For example, in *Friends*, Joe and Chandler often say "shit or damn it", while female actresses often use milder expletives, like "go to hell". The control of social conventions may lead to the different ways of speaking. (3) Empty adjectives. Females always use some adjectives, such as charming, divine, and cute to express their feelings. (4) Tag questions. Though males and females both use tag questions in a certain situation, females use tag questions specially, that is to say, when they express their opinions, tag questions are their favorite way of speaking even they are sure about what they want to say. Their purpose is to show they want to get recognized by others. (5) Intonation. Females prefer to a rising tone even in a declarative sentence, so their uncertainty and indecision have been revealed by a rising tone. (6) Superpolite forms. Females are more polite than males. They tend to prefer an indirect way of speaking. A case in point is "I was wondering whether it was possible for you to hand me that book?" (7) Hypercorrect grammar. Females usually speak in a formal manner not only in grammar, but also in pronunciation. They never use such words as "ain't", "goin". (8) Joke-telling and humor. The language of female lacks humor; they speak less humorously than males. Females inherently are not good at creating humor and understanding humor. For instance, we have known the famous classic and comic characters like Mr. Bean and Chaplin, but female comic characters can never be found to equate with them. The situation is the same in China, Zhao Benshan, Guo Degang and Zhou Libo has gained more popularity than any females.

Lakoff held that the differences in lexicon, syntax and pragmatics mentioned above give us a unique style of the language of female: obedient, uncertainty and passive. Their speaking style is determined by the requirements of the society for females and their subordinate social status.

2.2. Later study into this research topic

Lakoff's research has a great influence on the later linguists' research. In the field of linguistics, the differences between the language of both genders have been studied in Anthropology, Dialectology, and Sociolinguistics. In Jennifer Coates's view, the anthropologists regard language as a part of the social behavior of a certain social community. The dialectologists research into the changes of language and the decline of some dialects by analyzing the language of some community. Sociolinguists look gender as a social variable to study the relationship between language and gender. From their complicated understanding and researches, we can draw a conclusion that the researchers concerned about the differences between the languages of both genders in common.

In Anthropology, the researchers focus on differences in phonology and lexicon, etc. Flannery found the pronunciation of female is different from that of male to a great degree in the two tribes Montana and Gros Ventre. Males use /□/ at the place where females use / /.

In this language community, pronunciation is regarded as a sign of sex. So if males speak in the way of a female or females speak in the way of a male, he or she will be looked on as a bi-sexual. Edward Sapir described the language used in the tribe Yana in California. According to the following forms of dialogue: male-male, female-female, male-female, female-male, every one there may choose a proper form to communicate with others. For example, in the form of male-male dialogue, people follow such a kind of rule: if a word is a monosyllabic word or it is ended with a long vowel, diphthong, or a consonant, males

often add a suffix /-□□/ at the end of the word. Also

there are some researchers who pay more attention to the lexicon. Ide generalized these differences from the angle of Japanese. When the speaker refers to himself, males always use "ぼく", while females use "わたし" or "あたし". In fact, there are many researches into the differences in the field of anthropology.

Some dialectologists are very interested in the differences between the language of male and female

within their native language. The look on males or

females as their research subject, and try to find differences between the language of both genders in a language community by questionnaire and field work, etc. It is disputed to choose males as subject or females. Those dialectologists who choose females as their subject, for example, Wartburg (1925) etc. believe that females are more conservative than males in the respect of language. The reason is that females almost have never left the place where they lived; females often stay at home and have a chat with her family members; they seldom have a chance to contact with strangers. Furthermore, females never serve in the army. So the dialectologists believe that females are their ideal research subject not only in studying dialects, but also in studying language and gender. But there are still some other dialectologists, like Orton (1962), etc. who hold that males always speak dialects more frequently and truly than females in fact. The language of male can reflect the characteristics of dialects. Although people usually believe that females are more conservative than males, however, the language of females is not conservative for that females can accept new vocabulary easily than males. And the dialectologists also think the true situation between the languages of both genders can be revealed if they limit their researches to a region in which the economy is not developed and people there are almost out of touch with the outside world. In this sense, it will become doubtful that whether their research findings lack of practicability and universality. That is because the dialectologists have not paid attention to the regions where the economy is developed and people usually have a contact with outside world.

In sociolinguistics, the researchers study the relationship between language and gender in many aspects, such as gender and politeness, gender and language style. Most of the researchers believe that females are more polite than males. The language of female is indirect and implicit; male's is direct to the contrary. Some scholars like Tannen even hold that males and females come from different culture and the communication between them should be transcultural communication. So if failure in communication appears, it is nothing to be surprised at. Gray believes that males come from Mars and females come from Venus. Since they come from different celestial, there must be some

differences between them. The sociolinguists put forward their hypothesis and proved them. It is worth mentioning that all the researches reflect that there is some prejudice against the language of female and their communicative style.

3. Shortcomings of the only attention to differences between the languages of both genders

All of the researches above only pay a great deal attention to the differences. The research findings are of great value, but there are still some shortcomings. They have ignored the similarities between the language of male and female.

Firstly, the scholars all hold that there are innate differences between the language of male and female. When they communicate, the differences between them still exist. So it is possible that their communication would be a failure due to the differences. That is because no matter who are males or females, they tend to pass judgement on the opposite side from their own way, thus lead to the prejudice and discrimination against each other.

Secondly, the researchers regard males and females as separate community respectively. So they overlook differences between individuals. In this way, they would simplify differences between the language of male and female. Therefore they could not reveal all the differences in full aspects.

Thirdly, this research topic should not be approached only from the angle of gender. We know all the communication happens in specific contexts. The contextual factors are indispensable for research into the relationship between language and gender, such as, what is the relationship between people, their communicative objective when they communicate with each other. Consequently, only depending on one variable "gender" must result in one-sided research findings, thus exaggerate the function of gender.

Finally, most of the scholars already have deep-rooted prejudice against gender. Usually they may give a negative evaluation on the language of female and their

communicative style. This kind of prejudice must influence their explanation to the language materials. In this sense, the research findings must be lack of objectivity.

From the above analysis we can see shortcomings are obvious if the researches only follow differences between males and females. Similarities are also necessary in the research.

4. Close attention to similarities between the language of both genders

From the research on language and gender, it can be seen that some of the researches overemphasize the role of gender and fail to take into account context, variation and other factors. They focus on differences and overlook similarities. In order to have an overall and objective explanation to the relationship between males and females, similarities between them should be concerned about for the reason that similarities between them play the same important part.

Many scholars hold males and females come from different cultures, R. A. Borker and Tannen etc. have tried to probe the reasons for the language differences between male and female from the aspect of culture. They have conducted comprehensive researches on this topic based on social, cultural and psychological factors. In their research, they pointed out that males and females come from different cultural background; here “culture” refers to a sub-culture. These transcultural differences lead to the different characteristics of their language and behavior. And they think these cultural differences begin sprouting from childhood, form gradually, and maintain in the whole life. Besides the sub-culture of themselves, they still have their national culture, which make them belong to the same nation. Whether males or females, on one side, they form their values and way of behavior within their national culture; on the other side, they have their own values and way of behavior within their sub-culture. So their behavior, including language behavior must have differences and similarities. Generally speaking, the following aspects should be noticed in the research on this topic.

Firstly, researchers must take gender differences into account in all aspects, especially the differences between people’s personalities and their communicative styles because it is the differences between them that influence and determine their different way of using language, their living styles and their different views of life.

Secondly, researchers should place gender differences into specific contexts. Only in this way, can the research be more objective, deep and overall.

Thirdly, when beginning with research, researchers should abandon gender prejudice.

In summary, language is in a dynamically changing social context; it is not only influenced by the factor of gender, but also controlled by social, cultural, and psychological factors. Therefore, we should research on language and gender in an all-around view dynamically.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis above, we know the complicated relationship between gender and language. After reviewing the former researches into this topic, we can see the shortcomings, and the similarities between the language of male and female are as important as differences. It is very helpful for us to know all-round knowledge of gender and language in this field of sociolinguistics because language is an important communicative tool in human society and it evolves with the development of the society. Further research should take as many factors as possible into account and adopt comprehensive research methods, thus we can have an overall understanding of this social phenomenon--- language and gender.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture, Course Code: HUM-203

Week-9

Language Death, Revitalization and the Digital Age

LANGUAGE SHIFT, LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE, AND LANGUAGE DEATH

Of the approximately 6,000 languages still surviving today, about half the world's more than seven billion people speak only ten. These include Mandarin Chinese, two languages from India, Spanish, English, Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, and German. Many of the rest of the world's languages are spoken by a few thousand people, or even just a few hundred, and most of them are threatened with extinction, called **language death**. It has been predicted that by the end of this century up to 90 percent of the languages spoken today will be gone. The rapid disappearance of so many languages is of great concern to linguists and

anthropologists alike. When a language is lost, its associated culture and unique set of knowledge and worldview are lost with it forever. Remember Whorf's hypothesis. An interesting website shows [short videos of the last speakers](#) of several endangered languages, including one speaking an African "click language."

Definition: language death

The total extinction of a language.

Some minority languages are not threatened with extinction, even those that are spoken by a relatively small number of people. Others, spoken by many thousands, may be doomed. What determines which survive and which do not? Smaller languages that are associated with a specific country are likely to survive. Others that are spoken across many national boundaries are also less threatened, such as Quechua, an indigenous language spoken throughout much of South America, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. The great majority of the world's languages are spoken by people with minority status in their countries. After all, there are only about 193 countries in the world, and over 6,000 languages are spoken in them. You can do the math.

The survival of the language of a given speech community is ultimately based on the accumulation of individual decisions by its speakers to continue using it or to abandon it. The abandonment of a language in favor of a new one is called **language shift**. These decisions are usually influenced by the society's prevailing attitudes. In the case of a minority speech community that is surrounded by a more powerful majority, an individual might keep or abandon the native language depending on a complex array of factors. The most important factors will be the attitudes of the minority people toward themselves and their language, and the attitude of the majority toward the minority.

Definition: language shift

When a community stops using their old language and adopts a new one.

Language represents a marker of identity, an emblem of group membership and solidarity, but that marker may have a downside as well. If the majority look down on the minority as inferior in some way and discriminates against them, some members of the minority group may internalize that attitude and try to blend in with the majority by adopting the majority's culture and language. Others might more highly value their identity as a member of that stigmatized group, in spite of the discrimination by the majority, and continue to speak their language as a symbol of resistance against the more powerful group. One language that is a minority language when spoken in the United States and that shows no sign of dying out either there or in the world at large, is Spanish. It is the primary language in many countries and in the United States it is by far the largest minority language.



Figure 5.9.15.9.1: James Kim with his brother.

A former student of mine, James Kim (pictured in Figure 5.9.1 as a child with his brother), illustrates some of the common dilemmas a child of immigrants might go through as he loses his first language. Although he was born in California, he spoke only Korean for the first six years of his life. Then he went to school, where he was the only Korean child in his class. He quickly learned English, the language of instruction and the language of his classmates. Under peer pressure, he began refusing to speak Korean, even to his parents, who spoke little English. His parents tried to encourage him to keep his Korean language and culture by sending him to Korean school on Saturdays, but soon he refused to attend. As a college student, James began to regret the loss of the language of his parents, not to mention his relationship with them. He tried to take a college class in Korean, but it was too difficult and time consuming. After consulting with me, he created a six-minute radio piece, called “[First Language Attrition](#): Why My Parents and I Don’t Speak the Same Language,” while he was an intern at a National Public Radio station. He interviewed his parents in the piece and was embarrassed to realize he needed an interpreter.^[9] Since that time, he has started taking Korean lessons again, and he took his first trip to Korea with his family during the summer of 2014. He was very excited about the prospect of reconnecting with his culture, with his first language, and especially with his parents.

The Korean language as a whole is in no danger of extinction, but many Korean speaking communities of immigrants in the United States, like other minority language groups in many countries, are having difficulty maintaining their language and culture. Those who are the most successful live in large, geographically coherent neighborhoods; they maintain closer ties to their homeland by frequent visits, telephone, and email contact with relatives. There may also be a steady stream of new immigrants from the home country. This is the case with most Spanish speaking communities in the United States, but it is less so with the Korean community.^[10]

Another example of an oppressed minority group that has struggled with language and culture loss is Native Americans. Many were completely wiped out by the European colonizers, some by deliberate genocide but the great majority (up to 90 percent) by the diseases that the white explorers brought with them, against which the Native Americans had no immunity. In the twentieth-century, the American government stopped trying to kill Native Americans but instead tried to assimilate them into the white majority culture. It did this in part by forcing Native American children to go to boarding schools where they were required to cut their hair, practice Christianity, and speak only English. When they were allowed to go back home years later, they had lost their languages and their culture, but had not become culturally “white” either. The status of Native Americans in the nineteenth and

twentieth-centuries as a scorned minority prompted many to hide their ethnic identities even from their own children. In this way, the many hundreds of original Native American languages in the United States have dwindled to less than 140 spoken today, according to UNESCO. More than half of those could disappear in the next few years, since many are spoken by only a handful of older members of their tribes. However, a number of Native American tribes have recently been making efforts to revive their languages and cultures, with the help of linguists and often by using texts and old recordings made by early linguists like Edward Sapir.

REVITALIZATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

A fascinating example of a tribal language revitalization program is that of the Wampanoag tribe in Massachusetts. The Wampanoag were the Native Americans who met the Puritans when they landed at Plymouth Rock, helped them survive the first winter, and who were with them at the first Thanksgiving. The contemporary descendants of that historic tribe still live in Massachusetts, but bringing back their language was not something Wampanoag people had ever thought possible because no one had spoken it for more than a century.



Figure 5.9.25.9.2: Jessie Little Doe Baird with daughter Mae.

A young Wampanoag woman named Jessie Little Doe Baird (pictured in Figure 5.9.2 with her daughter Mae) was inspired by a series of dreams in which her ancestors spoke to her in their language, which she of course did not understand. She eventually earned a master's degree in Algonquian linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston and launched a project to bring her language back from the dead. This process was made possible by the existence of a large collection of documents, including copies of the King James Bible, written phonetically in Wampanoag during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. She also worked with speakers of languages related to the Algonquian family to help in the reconstruction of the language. The community has established a school to teach the language to the children and promote its use among the entire community. Her daughter Mae is among the first new native speakers of Wampanoag.^[11]

HOW IS THE DIGITAL AGE CHANGING COMMUNICATION?

The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth-century was just the beginning of technological transformations that made the spread of information in European languages and ideas possible across time and space using the printed word. Recent advances in travel and digital technology are rapidly transforming communication; now we can be in contact with almost anyone, anywhere, in seconds. However, it could be said that the new age of instantaneous access to everything and everyone is actually continuing a social divide that started with the printing press.

In the fifteenth-century, few people could read and write, so only the tiny educated minority were in a position to benefit from printing. Today, only those who have computers and the skills to use them, the educated and relatively wealthy, have access to this brave new world of communication. Some schools have adopted computers and tablets for their students, but these schools are more often found in wealthier neighborhoods. Thus, technology is continuing to contribute to the growing gap between the economic haves and the have-nots.

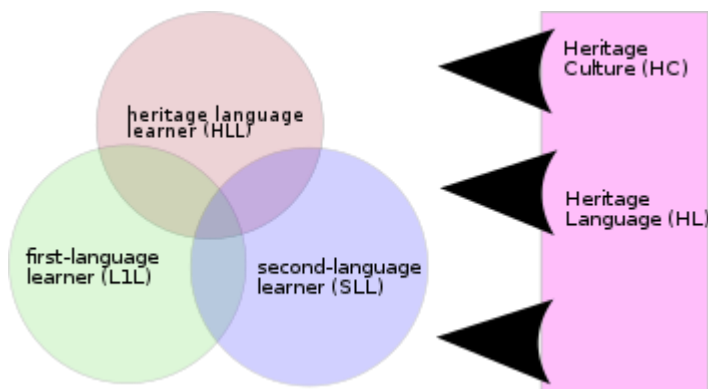
There is also a digital generation gap between the young, who have grown up with computers, and the older generations, who have had to learn to use computers as adults. These two generations have been referred to as digital natives and digital immigrants.^[12] The difference between the two groups can be compared to that of children versus adults learning a new language; learning is accomplished much more easily by the young.

Computers, and especially social media, have made it possible for millions of people to connect with each other for purposes of political activism, including “Occupy Wall Street” in the United States and the “Arab Spring” in the Middle East. Some anthropologists have introduced computers and cell phones to the people they studied in remote areas, and in this way they were able to stay in contact after finishing their ethnographic work. Those people, in turn, were now able to have greater access to the outside world.

Facebook and Twitter are becoming key elements in the survival of a number of endangered indigenous languages. Facebook is now available in over 70 languages, and Twitter in about 40 languages. For example, a website has been created that seeks to preserve Anishinaabemowin, an endangered Native American language from Michigan. The language has 8,000-10,000 speakers, but most of the native speakers are over 70 years old, which means the language is threatened with extinction. Modern social media are an ideal medium to help encourage young people to communicate in their language to keep it alive.^[13] Clearly, language and communication through modern technology are in the forefront of a rapidly changing world, for better or for worse. It's anybody's guess what will happen next.

Endangered language

More than 50% of the world's endangered languages are located in just eight countries (denoted in red on the map): [India](#), [Brazil](#), [Mexico](#), [Australia](#), [Indonesia](#), [Nigeria](#), [Papua New Guinea](#) and [Cameroon](#). In such countries and around them are the areas that are the most linguistically diverse in the world (denoted in blue on the map).



[Language death](#) can be the result of language shift in which [ethnic group](#) members no longer learn their [heritage language](#) as their [first language](#).

An **endangered language** or **moribund language** is a [language](#) that is at risk of disappearing as its speakers die out or shift to speaking other languages. Language loss occurs when the language has no more native speakers and becomes a "[dead language](#)". If no one can speak the language at all, it becomes an "[extinct language](#)". A dead language may still be studied through recordings or writings, but it is still dead or extinct unless there are [fluent](#) speakers.^[1] Although languages have always become extinct throughout human history, they are currently dying at an accelerated rate because of [globalization](#), [mass migration](#), cultural replacement, [imperialism](#), [neocolonialism](#)^[2] and [linguicide](#) (language killing).^[3][\[better source needed\]](#)

[Language shift](#) most commonly occurs when speakers switch to a language [associated with social or economic power](#) or spoken more widely, the ultimate result being language death. The general consensus is that there are between 6,000^[4] and 7,000 languages currently spoken. Some linguists estimate that between 50% and 90% of them will be severely endangered or dead by the year 2100.^[2] The [20 most common languages](#), each with more than 50 million speakers, are spoken by 50% of the world's population, but most languages are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people.^[2]

The first step towards language death is *potential endangerment*. This is when a language faces strong external pressure, but there are still communities of speakers who pass the language to their children. The second stage is *endangerment*. Once a language has reached the endangerment stage, there are only a few speakers left and children are, for the most part, not learning the language. The third stage of language extinction is *seriously endangered*. During this stage, a language is unlikely to survive another generation and will soon be extinct. The fourth stage is *moribund*, followed by the fifth stage *extinction*.

Many projects are under way aimed at preventing or slowing language loss by [revitalizing](#) endangered languages and promoting education and literacy in minority languages, often involving joint projects between language communities and linguists.^[5] Across the world, many countries have enacted [specific legislation](#) aimed at protecting and stabilizing the language of indigenous [speech communities](#). Recognizing that most of the world's endangered languages are unlikely to be revitalized, many linguists are also working on [documenting](#) the thousands of languages of the world about which little or nothing is known.

Number of languages[\[edit\]](#)

The total number of contemporary languages in the world is not known, and it is not well defined what constitutes a separate language as opposed to a dialect. Estimates vary depending on the extent and means of the research undertaken, and the definition of a distinct language and the current state of knowledge of remote and isolated language communities. The number of known languages varies over time as some of them become extinct and others are newly discovered. An accurate number of languages in the world was not yet known until the use of universal, [systematic surveys](#) in the later half of the twentieth century.^[6] The majority of linguists in the early twentieth century refrained from making estimates. Before then, estimates were frequently the product of guesswork and very low.^[7]

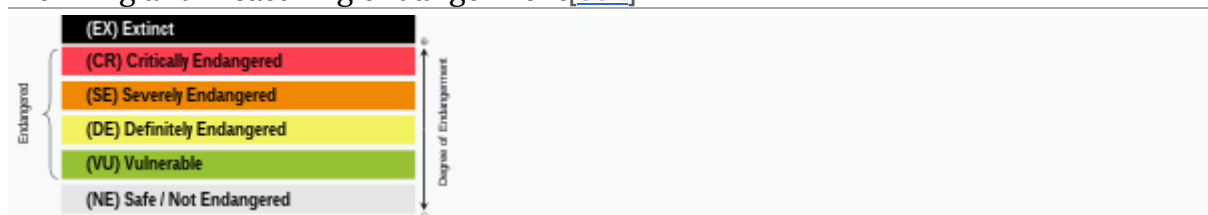
One of the most active research agencies is [SIL International](#), which maintains a database, [Ethnologue](#), kept up to date by the contributions of linguists globally.^[8]

Ethnologue's 2005 count of languages in its database, excluding duplicates in different countries, was 6,912, of which 32.8% (2,269) were in Asia, and 30.3% (2,092) in Africa.^[9] This contemporary tally must be regarded as a variable number within a range. Areas with a particularly large number of languages that are nearing extinction include: [Eastern Siberia](#),^[citation needed] [Central Siberia](#), [Northern Australia](#), [Central America](#), and the [Northwest Pacific Plateau](#). Other hotspots are [Oklahoma](#) and the [Southern Cone](#) of South America.

Endangered sign languages^[edit]

Almost all of the study of language endangerment has been with spoken languages. A UNESCO study of endangered languages does not mention sign languages.^[10] However, some [sign languages](#) are also endangered, such as [Alipur Village Sign Language](#) (AVSL) of India,^[11] [Adamorobe Sign Language](#) of Ghana, [Ban Khor Sign Language](#) of Thailand, and [Plains Indian Sign Language](#).^{[12][13]} Many sign languages are used by small communities; small changes in their environment (such as contact with a larger sign language or dispersal of the deaf community) can lead to the endangerment and loss of their traditional sign language. Methods are being developed to assess the vitality of sign languages.^[14]

Defining and measuring endangerment^[edit]



How UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger classifies languages

While there is no definite threshold for identifying a language as endangered, [UNESCO's](#) 2003 document entitled *Language vitality and endangerment*^[15] outlines nine factors for determining language vitality:

1. Intergenerational language transmission
2. Absolute number of speakers
3. Proportion of speakers existing within the total (global) population
4. Language use within existing contexts and domains
5. Response to language use in new domains and media

6. Availability of materials for language education and literacy
7. Government and institutional language policies
8. Community attitudes toward their language
9. Amount and quality of documentation

Many languages, for example some in [Indonesia](#), have tens of thousands of speakers but are endangered because children are no longer learning them, and speakers are shifting to using the [national language](#) (e.g. [Indonesian](#)) in place of local languages. In contrast, a language with only 500 speakers might be considered very much alive if it is the primary language of a community, and is the first (or only) spoken language of all children in that community.

Asserting that "Language diversity is essential to the human heritage", UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages offers this definition of an endangered language: "... when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, adults or children."^[15]

UNESCO operates with four levels of language endangerment between "safe" (not endangered) and "extinct" (no living speakers), based on intergenerational transfer: "vulnerable" (not spoken by children outside the home), "definitely endangered" (children not speaking), "severely endangered" (only spoken by the oldest generations), and "critically endangered" (spoken by few members of the oldest generation, often [semi-speakers](#)).^[4] UNESCO's [Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger](#) categorises 2,473 languages by level of endangerment.^[16]

Using an alternative scheme of classification, linguist [Michael E. Krauss](#) defines languages as "safe" if it is considered that children will probably be speaking them in 100 years; "endangered" if children will probably not be speaking them in 100 years (approximately 60–80% of languages fall into this category) and "moribund" if children are not speaking them now.^[17]

Many scholars have devised techniques for determining whether languages are endangered. One of the earliest is GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) proposed by [Joshua Fishman](#) in 1991.^[18] In 2011 an entire issue of [Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development](#) was devoted to the study of ethnolinguistic vitality, Vol. 32.2, 2011, with several authors presenting their own tools for measuring language vitality. A number of other published works on measuring language vitality have been published, prepared by authors with varying situations and applications in mind.^{[19][20][21][22][23]}

Causes^[edit]

According to the Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages,^[2] there are four main types of causes of language endangerment:

Causes that put the populations that speak the languages in physical danger, such as:

1. [War](#) and [genocide](#). Examples of this are the language(s) of the native population of [Tasmania](#) who died from diseases, and many extinct and endangered languages of the Americas where [indigenous peoples](#) have been subjected to genocidal violence. The [Miskito language](#) in [Nicaragua](#) and the [Mayan languages](#) of [Guatemala](#) have been affected by civil war.

2. [Natural disasters](#), [famine](#), [disease](#). Any natural disaster severe enough to wipe out an entire population of native language speakers has the capability of endangering a language. An example of this is the languages spoken by the people of the [Andaman Islands](#), who were seriously affected by the [2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami](#).

Causes which prevent or discourage speakers from using a language, such as:

1. Cultural, political, or economic [marginalization](#) creates a strong incentive for individuals to abandon their language (on behalf of themselves and their children as well) in favor of another more prestigious language; one example of this is assimilatory education. This frequently happens when indigenous populations and ethnic groups who were once subjected to colonisation and/or earlier conquest, in order to achieve a higher social status, have a better chance to get employment and/or acceptance in a given social network only when they adopt the cultural and linguistic traits of other groups with [enough power imbalance](#) to [culturally integrate](#) them, through various means of [ingroup and outgroup](#) coercion (see [below](#)); examples of this kind of endangerment are the cases of [Welsh](#),^[24] [Scottish Gaelic](#), and [Scots](#) in [Great Britain](#), [Irish](#) in [Ireland](#), the [Sardinian language](#) in [Italy](#),^{[25][26]} the [Ryukyuan](#) and [Ainu](#) languages in [Japan](#),^[27] and the [Chamorro language](#) in [Guam](#). This is also the most common cause of language endangerment.^[2] Ever since the Indian government adopted [Hindi](#) as the official language of the [union](#) government, Hindi has taken over many languages in [India](#).^[28] Other forms of [cultural imperialism](#) include religion and technology; religious groups may hold the belief that the use of a certain language is immoral or require its followers to speak one language that is the approved language of the religion (like the [Arabic language](#) as the language of the [Quran](#), with the pressure for many [North African](#) groups of [Amazigh](#) or [Egyptian](#) descent to [Arabize](#)^[29]). There are also cases where cultural hegemony may often arise not from an earlier history of domination or conquest, but simply from increasing contact with larger and more influential communities through better communications, compared with the relative isolation of past centuries.
2. [Political repression](#). This has frequently happened when [nation-states](#), as they work to promote a single national culture, limit the opportunities for using minority languages in the public sphere, schools, the media, and elsewhere, sometimes even prohibiting them altogether. Sometimes ethnic groups are forcibly resettled, or children may be removed to be schooled away from home, or otherwise have their chances of cultural and linguistic continuity disrupted. This has happened in the case of many [Native American](#), [Louisiana French](#) and [Australian languages](#), as well as European and Asian minority languages such as [Breton](#), [Occitan](#), or [Alsatian](#) in [France](#) and [Kurdish](#) in [Turkey](#).
3. [Urbanization](#). The movement of people into urban areas can force people to learn the language of their new environment. Eventually, later generations will lose the ability to speak their native language, leading to endangerment. Once urbanization takes place, new families who live there will be under pressure to speak the [lingua franca](#) of the city.

4. [Intermarriage](#) can also cause language endangerment, as there will always be pressure to speak one language to each other. This may lead to children only speaking the more common language spoken between the married couple.

Often multiple of these causes act at the same time. Poverty, disease and disasters often affect minority groups disproportionately, for example causing the dispersal of speaker populations and decreased survival rates for those who stay behind.

Marginalization and endangerment[\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Minoritized language](#)



[Dolly Pentreath](#), last native speaker of the [Cornish language](#), in an engraved portrait published in 1781



The last three native speakers of [Magati Ke](#)

Among the causes of language endangerment cultural, political and economic [marginalization](#) accounts for most of the world's language endangerment. Scholars distinguish between several types of marginalization: Economic dominance negatively affects minority languages when poverty leads people to migrate towards the cities or to other countries, thus dispersing the speakers. Cultural dominance occurs when literature and higher education is only accessible in the majority language. Political dominance occurs when education and political activity is carried out exclusively in a majority language.

Historically, in colonies, and elsewhere where speakers of different languages have come into contact, some languages have been considered superior to others: often one language has attained a dominant position in a country. Speakers of endangered

languages may themselves come to associate their language with negative values such as poverty, illiteracy and social stigma, causing them to wish to adopt the dominant language which is associated with social and economical progress and [modernity](#).^[2] Immigrants moving into an area may lead to the endangerment of the autochthonous language.

What can we do to preserve 'ancestral tongues'?

Why does a language become endangered or even vanish? Some languages disappear with the death of their last speaker, while others gradually disappear in bilingual or multilingual cultures as indigenous tongues take the back seat at school and on television. Another reason could be the lack of written form for some languages, which are difficult to preserve but easily forgotten.

Last but not least, an increasingly globalized and connected world makes languages characteristics of remote places no longer protected by national borders or natural boundaries. For better communication and better development, we start to learn and use a widespread language like English.

The trend of globalization is unstoppable, but what can we do?

Dr. Lim says we need to find a way for such indigenous languages to have not only cultural and symbolic and social dimensions, but also find the capital that would help their survival.



Children participate in activities designed to practice their native language to ensure the continuity of cultural heritage in Tingo Maria, Peru. /VCG Photo

When talking about the difficulties of her organization, Tcherneshoff said:
"The main issue we encounter is funding."

Wikitongues is a non-profit organization that aims to build a public archive of every language in the world. They have thousands of volunteers from all over the world.

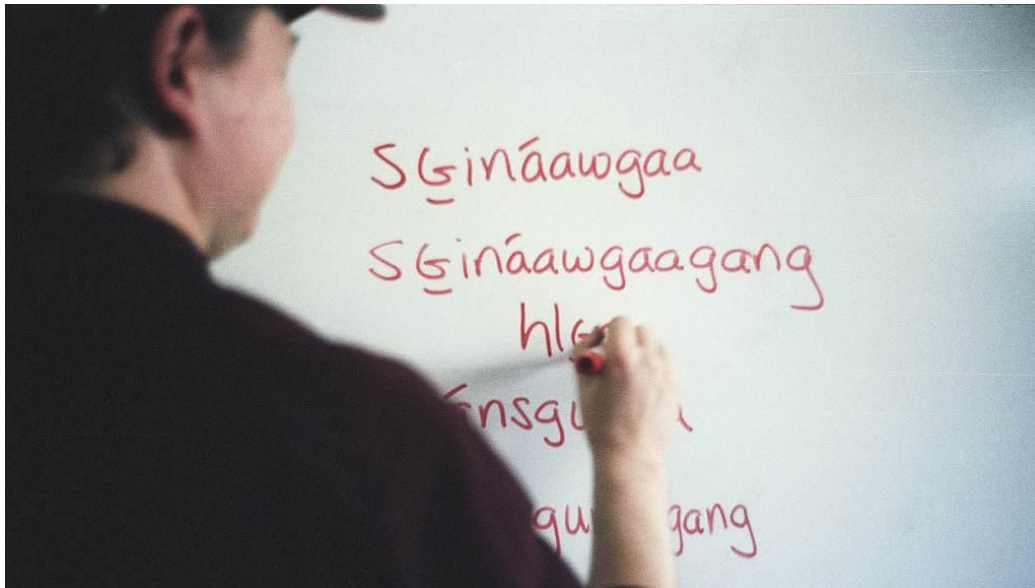
She shared a story of a volunteer from the Democratic Republic of Congo named Hangi who insists on recording videos of his mother tongue Kihunde even when it is difficult to access the Internet. He is also currently working on a phrasebook in Kihunde and has begun translating classical poetry works into Kihunde.

Tcherneshoff suggests that anyone can contribute by researching the area where they are from. "What languages are indigenous to the region? Are they still in use, or are they inactive?"

Lim and Tcherneshoff both agree that social media is a successful tool in language preservation nowadays.

"Such platforms make the language relevant for our world today – not only a language for 'traditional' topics or rituals – with new vocabulary being

developed, and making it attractive for young people to use, which is a key to maintaining a language," Dr. Lim said.



A linguist writes Haida for a language class in Ketchikan, southeast Alaska. /VCG Photo

Actions to hear vanishing voices

The diversity of languages is threatened, but luckily, people are taking action. An organization like Wikitongues count on volunteers to save languages.

There are young language activists who create new generations of language learners through mobile apps in the form of games and dictionaries.

Governments are participating as well. Canada passed the Indigenous Languages bill earlier this month, several universities in the U.S. have started offering courses in Native American languages, indigenous children in 181 of India's state primary schools will have access to literacy education in their own languages.

China is also doing its share. In January, UNESCO officially announced the Yuelu Proclamation on the protection of linguistic diversity, which was discussed and passed at an international conference held in the city of Changsha last year. China also has a language project in place to preserve its various dialects.

Some languages are vanishing, but the future lies in our hands. Every one of us can make a difference. Like Tcherneshoff says, maybe we should move forward optimistically.

What Is an Endangered Language?

Anthony C. Woodbury

[Download this document as a pdf.](#)

What does it mean to say a language is endangered?

An endangered language is one that is likely to become extinct in the near future. Many languages are failing out of use and being replaced by others that are more widely used in the region or nation, such as English in the U.S. or Spanish in Mexico. Unless current trends are reversed, these endangered languages will become extinct within the next century. Many other languages are no longer being learned by new generations of children or by new adult speakers; these languages will become extinct when their last speaker dies. In fact, dozens of languages today have only one native speaker still living, and that person's death will mean the extinction of the language: It will no longer be spoken, or known, by anyone.

Is that what happened to dead languages like Ancient Greek and Latin?

No. These languages are considered dead because they are no longer spoken in the form in which we find them in ancient writings. But they weren't abruptly replaced by other languages; instead, Ancient Greek slowly evolved into modern Greek, and Latin slowly evolved into modern Italian, Spanish, French, Romanian, and other languages. In the same way, the Middle English of Chaucer's day is no longer spoken, but it has evolved into Modern English.

How do languages become extinct?

Outright genocide is one cause of language extinction. For example, when European invaders exterminated the Tasmanians in the early 19th century, an unknown number of languages died as well. Far more often, however, languages become extinct when a community finds itself under pressure to integrate with a larger or more powerful group. Sometimes the people learn the outsiders' language in addition to their own; this has happened in Greenland, a territory of Denmark, where Kalaallisut is learned alongside Danish. But often the community is pressured to give up its language and even its ethnic and cultural identity. This has been the case for the ethnic Kurds in Turkey, who are forbidden by law to print or formally teach their language. It has also been the case for younger speakers of Native American languages, who, as recently as the 1960s, were punished for speaking their native languages at boarding schools.

Is language extinction sudden or gradual?

Both. The fate of a language can be changed in a single generation if it is no longer being learned by children. This has been true for some Yupik Eskimo communities in Alaska, where just 20 years ago all of the children spoke Yupik; today the youngest speakers of Yupik in some of these communities are in their 20s, and the children speak only English. Likewise, Scots Gaelic was spoken on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, until the 1940s, but by the 1970s the language was no longer being learned by children. In other cases, languages have declined much more slowly. Iroquoian languages like Onondaga and Mohawk, spoken in upstate New York and adjacent parts of Canada, have been declining for over two centuries; yet they are still spoken today by older adults and, in the case of Mohawk, some younger people as well.

How many languages are endangered?

According to one count, 6,703 separate languages were spoken in the world in 1996. Of these, 1000 were spoken in the Americas, 2011 in Africa, 225 in Europe, 2165 in Asia, and 1320 in the Pacific, including Australia. These numbers should be taken with a grain of salt, because our information about many languages is scant or outdated, and it is hard to draw the line between languages and dialects. But most linguists agree that there are well over 5,000 languages in the world. A century from now, however, many of these languages may be extinct. Some linguists believe the number may decrease by half; some say the total could fall to mere hundreds as the majority of the world's languages - most spoken by a few thousand people or less - give way to languages like English, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Indonesian, Arabic, Swahili, and Hindi. By some estimates, 80% of the world's languages may vanish within the next century.

Whose languages are endangered?

Although the endangered languages are spoken by minority communities, these communities account for most of the world's languages. They include the tribes of Papua New Guinea, who alone speak as many as 900 languages; Aboriginal peoples of Australia, over 80% of whose native languages will die with the current generation; the native peoples of the Americas, who still retain 90% or so of their languages; the national and tribal minorities of Africa, Asia, and Oceania, speaking several thousand more languages; and marginalized European peoples such as the Irish, the Frisians, the Provençal, and the Basques.

How many North American native languages are endangered?

According to a recent survey, out of hundreds of languages that were once spoken in North America, only 194 remain. Of these, 33 are spoken by both adults and children; another 34 are spoken by adults, but by few children; 73 are spoken almost entirely by adults over 50; 49 are spoken only by a few people, mostly over 70; and 5 may have already become extinct.

The languages that are not being transmitted to children, or that are being learned by few children, are endangered and likely to become extinct. In fact, only the 33 languages in the first group seem 'safe.' But most of these are threatened as well because their speakers live near other communities where the children speak English. And all native North American groups are under pressure to give up their native languages and use English instead. The younger generation feels the pressure especially strongly; television and movies often send a message that discourages the maintenance of community values, inviting young viewers to join a more glamorous and more commercialized world that has no apparent connection to their native community and its elders and traditions.

Nonetheless, although a great deal of linguistic heritage is clearly in danger, the fact that so many Native American languages have survived into the 21st century is evidence of the strength of these communities and of the fundamental value of language to human beings.

What does language extinction mean for a community-and for the rest of us?

When a community loses its language, it often loses a great deal of its cultural identity at the same time. Although language loss may be voluntary or involuntary, it always involves pressure of some kind, and it is often felt as a loss of social identity or as a symbol of defeat. That doesn't mean that a group's social identity is always lost when its language is lost; for example, both the Chumash in California and the Manx on the Isle of Man have lost their native languages, but not their identity as Chumash or Manx. But language is a powerful symbol of a group's identity. Much of the cultural, spiritual, and intellectual life of a people is experienced through language. This ranges from prayers, myths, ceremonies, poetry, oratory, and technical vocabulary to everyday greetings, leave-takings, conversational styles, humor, ways of speaking to children, and terms for habits, behaviors, and emotions. When a language is lost, all of this must be refashioned in the new language-with different words, sounds, and grammar- if it is to be kept at all. Frequently traditions are abruptly lost in the process and replaced by the cultural habits of the more powerful group. For these reasons, among others, it is often very important to the community itself that its language survive.

Much is lost from a scientific point of view as well when a language disappears. A people's history is passed down through its language, so when the language disappears, it may take with it important information about the early history of the community. The loss of human languages also severely limits what linguists can learn about human cognition. By studying what all of the world's languages have in common, we can find out what is and isn't possible in a human language. This in turn tells us important things about the human mind and how it is that children are able to learn a complex system like language so quickly and easily. The fewer languages there are to study, the less we will be able to learn about the human mind.

But wouldn't it be easier if everyone just spoke the same language?

Although for many people it's important to know a major national or international language, that doesn't mean they must abandon their mother tongue. Children who grow up speaking two or more languages learn those languages just as well as children who grow up speaking only one language.

What can be done to preserve endangered languages?

A community that wants to preserve or revive its language has a number of options. Perhaps the most dramatic story is that of Modern Hebrew, which was revived as a mother tongue after centuries of being learned and studied only in its ancient written form. Irish has had considerable institutional and political support as the national language of Ireland, despite major inroads by English. In New Zealand, Maori communities established nursery schools staffed by elders and conducted entirely in Maori, called kohanga reo, 'language nests'. There, and in Alaska, Hawaii, and elsewhere, this model is being extended to primary and in some cases secondary school. And in California, younger adults have become language apprentices to older adult speakers in communities where only a few older speakers are still living. A growing number of conferences, workshops, and publications now offer support for individuals, schools, and communities trying to preserve languages.

Because so many languages are in danger of disappearing, linguists are trying to learn as much about them as possible, so that even if the language disappears, all knowledge of the language won't disappear at the same time. Researchers make videotapes, audiotapes, and written records of language use in both formal and informal settings, along with translations.

In addition, they analyze the vocabulary and rules of the language and write dictionaries and grammars. Linguists also work with communities around the world that want to preserve their languages, offering both technical and practical help with language teaching, maintenance, and revival. This help is based in part on the dictionaries and grammars that they write. But linguists can help in other ways, too, using their experience in teaching and studying a wide variety of languages. They can use what they've learned about other endangered languages to help a community preserve its own language, and they can take advantage of the latest technology for recording and studying languages.

Are new languages being born to replace the languages that die?

Yes. Many signed languages, including American Sign Language, have been born within the last few centuries. Tok Pisin, the national language of Papua New Guinea, developed from an English-based pidgin (a blend of two or more languages). And over many centuries, different dialects of a single language can grow to be distinct languages in their own right, just as dialects of Latin developed into French, Italian, and so on.

But these new languages do not compare to the linguistic heritage that is being lost. The thousands of languages spoken in the world today have evolved over the entire course of human history. Every group of related languages is separated from every other group by at least 5000 years of development, usually more. If English were to become the sole language of every person on earth, it would take tens of thousands of years to produce anything like the diversity that is our heritage—assuming we could somehow reproduce the conditions under which this diversity grew. For all practical purposes, the diversity we have now is absolutely irreplaceable.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

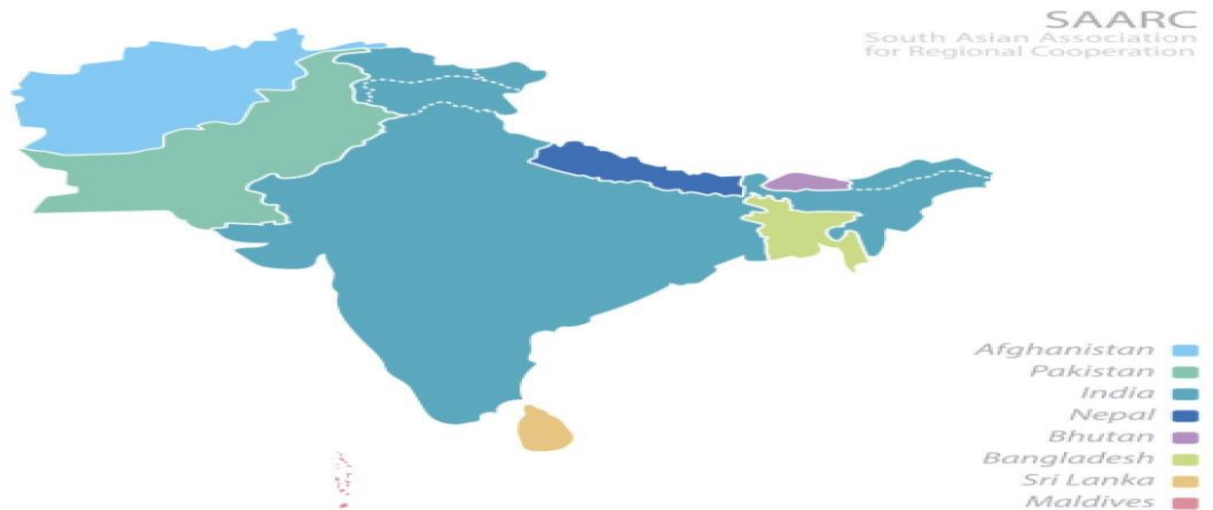
Semester: 8th Semester

Course Title: Language and Culture, Course Code: HUM-203

Week-10

Exploring the Culture & History of South Asia

South Asia has been hugely influential in shaping the world as we know it, including life in the UK. When we explore our shared past, reflect on our present and anticipate our future, South Asia plays a central role in all of it.



Map of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Home to nearly two billion people (a quarter of the world's population), the eight countries that make up South Asia are India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal. This varied region stretches from tropical Sri Lanka in the south to mountainous Nepal in the north, and from Pakistan in the west to Bangladesh in the east.

The history and languages of South Asia

South Asia's rich history goes back thousands of years. Some of the earliest forms of advanced human civilisation began there and it was also part of the ancient Silk Road trading route.

The region's past encompasses kingdoms and empires, as well as spiritual and artistic movements. Historically, it has had cultural, religious, economic and political connections to East Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Europe.

Courtyard of the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan

Because of these historic connections, most of South Asia's languages are part of the Indo-European family spoken by almost half of the world's population. In fact, this region is one of the most linguistically diverse on the planet and has over 650 languages (some people put that figure even higher). A few of the main ones are Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi, Urdu, Dari and Nepali.



The religious heritage of South Asia

[South Asia is the origin of various major religions](#), including Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. Several countries in the region also have Muslim-majority populations.

These faiths have spread across the world, influencing spirituality, philosophy, art, culture and history. For instance, in just the UK there are over 300 Hindu temples and over 200 Buddhist temples.

Tea plantations in Sri Lanka

British connections with South Asia

British links to South Asia span centuries and have left lasting (and sometimes difficult) legacies still being negotiated today. These include Britain's role in Partition, the current Indian-Pakistani relationship and the Bangladeshi War of Independence.

However, South Asia's ongoing connection with the UK means that communities with roots across all of the region are still enriching British life.

South Asia's ongoing influence

From [yoga](#) to ayurvedic medicine to [Indian head massage](#), South Asian wellbeing and spiritual practices currently benefit millions of people worldwide.

The region's rich food and drink heritage is also influential, with Sri Lankan tea and North Indian korma being two obvious examples. However, Afghan kofta, Nepalese momos and Goan fish curry are also increasingly finding their way onto plates across the globe.

South Asian wellbeing and spiritual practices currently benefit millions of people worldwide

South Asia's impact on the contemporary world

South Asia is central to current day politics and economics. It plays a major role in military relationships, climate agreements, and arms sales & manufacturing. South Asia's ports are also vital global trade hubs.

The region's importance can be seen in how Russia, China, Europe, the US and Japan are engaging with it. Decisions made by South Asian countries can have a huge global impact that affect all of us.

India's has major social, political, and economical reach

Arts and culture in South Asia

Beyond the world of geopolitics, it's well worth getting to know South Asia's incredible cultural heritage. Across film, TV, music, dance, literature and contemporary art, this region has endless experiences to offer.

From Bollywood movies to traditional Sri Lankan dance, South Asia's arts and culture has extended far beyond its borders into cinemas, theatres and homes globally. Yet in many respects, the rest of the world has barely scratched the surface of what South Asia has to offer.

From culture to cuisine, the various countries and nations of South Asia enrich us all. The more we explore what they have to offer, the more that we can discover.

Bangladesh: A Repository of Cultural Diversity

In today's, world becoming ever so small, in terms of reach and understanding, the word Diversity brings forth a very important connotation. We see words like bio-diversity, racial diversity, linguistic diversity, religious diversity, artistic diversity, etc. highlighting whenever the comity of humankind bring nations together for a world free of fear. The interesting point to note is the fact that before humankind started thinking of diversity, nature endowed it on us to be able to live in harmony. ALY ZAKER dedicates his piece to Mother Nature, which is a protector and guardian of humankind, always showing them the path to peace and tranquility.

As we proceed, Bangladesh is known to be a homogeneous country. But at the same time it has been a storehouse of diverse culture. We laid down our lives for our mother tongue in 1952, fought a war in 1971, when our homogeneous culture was threatened by an alien power, who tried to impose its illogical wishes on our cultural fabric. At the same time, we fought a war also to ward off attack on its diversity. We know how the Pakistani colonialists wanted to take out a large portion of Nazrul's creations like 'Shyama Sangeet' from his rich repertoire and tried to ban Rabindranath on the pretext that he was not a Muslim. At this juncture, as a curtain raiser, it might be logical to define culture as enunciated in the book of anthropology:

A) Culture is: "the total of inherited ideas, belief, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared-bases of social action."

B) Culture is: "the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of that group."

C) Culture is: "the artistic and social pursuits, expressions and taste valued by a society or class as in arts, manners, dress, etc."

Now that we have defined culture, we would like to take a closer look at the meaning of cultural diversity. Its description, as given by anthropologists, is: "Cultural diversity is based on the idea that cultural identities of each component of a given population should get equal importance to give a diverse and colourful cultural fabric to a nation." But the fact also remains that if anyone were to look closely at Bangladesh, they might overlook the aspect of diversity because of the

following statistics. The country has 80% alluvial plain land lying at an average elevation of less than 10 metres above sea level and therefore the landscape may seem to lack diversity. Ninety-eight percent of the people speak Bangla, so linguistically they are very homogeneous as well. The vast majority of the population of at least 89% is Muslims and most of its inhabitants come from an Aryan-Mongoloid-Dravidian mix. Therefore, the homogeneity of Bangladeshi people is further fortified. But let us now consider all the little nuances that make for an interesting mosaic of diversity within this apparently homogeneous land, which serves as a great melting pot of tolerance, understanding and heritage. Geographically speaking, Bangladesh is divided in distinct cultural diversity areas. The northern plains, its old capital of Mahasthan, had always been the gateway to Bangladesh. The southern region and its old capital, Bagerhat, preserve unity in its forests and jungles. The eastern region and its old capital, Chittagong, hosted the hill people and their cultural uniqueness. While the central region and its old capital, Sonargaon, served as the meeting point for traders and merchants coming from as far East as China and as far West as Rome. The factors of social unity through diversity are multifarious.

A) Bangladesh is a home to all four major religions and quite a few sects and faiths within or outside those religions that are unique. Hence we see that from time immemorial until such time as the British colonialists introduced the political weapon of divide and rule, the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and many other religious minorities lived in an enviable abode of peace and harmony.

B) In sartorial matters there has always been a similarity amongst people belonging to various faiths, casts, creed or colour. However, Bangladeshis have accepted a variety of designs and patterns as also fabrics that have been brought by the rank outsiders to this country. They have adapted these imported clothes to suit their own taste and requirement.

C) In matters of food, there has been very little difference and the Bangladeshi palette, across the board, would relish in gay abandon the goodness of fish curry and plain boiled rice. That said the Bangalis are known to experiment with a variety of culinary delight coming from the west or the east.

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D) In matters of sports and games, Bangladesh has indigenous and localised events that have been popular through the length and breadth of this nation. Kabadi, ha-du-du, dariyabandha, Gollachhut, Boat racing, Bullock Cart Racing, Kite Flying et al. have always been favourite sporting past-time amongst the Bangladeshis. With the emergence to modern time our young people have enthusiastically taken to diverse international games like football, volleyball, basketball, hockey or cricket. Indeed, in cricket we are now a force to reckon with. A great breakthrough has been made by our women in taking active part in many of these sporting events and competing at the international levels.

E) Now comes the subject of practising art form, which has become very vibrant in

Bangladesh since its birth and in which I had the rare privilege to have a direct role to play. First of all, the cultural activists in Bangladesh firmly believe that Bangladesh has equal legacy to the sub-continental culture that has developed over thousands of years. And this belief in itself has brought about and cemented an understanding between cultures that were homegrown and those that came from the next door neighbours. Beyond the neighbours we can see in our cultural practices a great influence of the culture of the west, which has fused into a popular and vibrant new form and have become a part of our cultural mix.

F) Our painters have always drawn inspiration from major international trends of classical and modern art and freely used the forms in depicting the local content that they have been inspired by. Therefore, it will never be difficult for an onlooker to understand the locale and the narrative in a painting that has been drawn following the Dada, Surreal, Cubist, expressionist or even post modernistic forms. This, however, does not preclude totally indigenous form and content of art by various stalwarts of our country.

G) Our works of literature have again assimilated diverse thoughts and philosophies in expressing their own anguish or happiness. And these have been done through various forms ranging from naturalism and realism to abstraction and even absurdity. These influences come from indigenous sources as also beyond boundaries.

H) Let us now move towards music. In this category, perhaps, diversity has come to a greater extent both in form and content through the windows that we have opened up to world culture from the day of our independence. It is not rare to be able to see rendition of a variety of Indian Classical dance or listen to the sub-continental music. And these are exceedingly popular amongst the Bangladeshi music and dance lovers. Add to it, the infusion of modern or semi-classical western music like Jazz, Blues etc.

I) The film scenario in Bangladesh is still at a nascent stage. Our commercial films are nothing much to write home about. But since the independence of the country the younger film enthusiasts through the film society movement and later, short and full length film making movement tried to make decent and artistic films for an otherwise hungry audience. This has now assumed the character of what is known as parallel cinema. We all know that film is a very modern form of expression and owes its origin to the west. Therefore, the form used essentially has come from its place of origin beyond our boundaries. We all know that even Satyajit Ray, in his immortal role as a filmmaker, was inspired by *Bicycle Thief* by De-Sica and *River* by Jean Renoir. This blend of an ostensibly foreign medium with local content and indigenous philosophy brought about a diversity that is already making waves in the international circuit.

J) With the independence of Bangladesh, the most vibrant scene was observed in the field of stage theatre. In fact, this art form has been marking time during the entire period of colonisation of East Bengal by the Pakistanis. Immediately after independence, some young people up to the brim with enthusiasm and reverberating with the spirit of freedom came forward with newer ideas of stage plays. This gave birth to the concept of intermittent staging of plays which a theatre enthusiast could

see given any evening of the week. This essentially was urban theatre, and, again, played the key role in importing diversity on our stage. Just as we saw original Bangladeshi plays being performed, the viewers here were also entertained by classics of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Chekhov, Zuckmayer, O'Neill, and modern playwrights like Beckett, Albee, Bond, Osborne, et al. We have also seen successful adaptation of plays by famous Indian playwrights being staged in Dhaka. Some of the plays emanating from the classic Indian Mythology have had very successful staging in Bangla on a regular basis. This element of diversity in theatre got a tailwind with some of the foreign agencies taking active interest in theatre training and education. Worth-mentioning amongst these are the scholarships offered by the Indian government for theatre and film education in Delhi and Pune. This was followed by an active interest of the British Council in bringing over theatre experts and directors to conduct workshops and direct classical Shakespearian plays in Bangla. This collaboration and a similar programme undertaken by the American Center happened in the 1970s. We have also had the formation of a very active centre of the International Theatre Institute in Bangladesh, the President of Bangladesh ITI has gone on to become the Chief of world ITI. This facilitated many exchanges between Bangladeshi theatre practitioners and those of various world theatre centres. It also harnessed diversity in this field of performing art.

K) So far, I have generally talked about the diversity in culture as triggered by external contribution. I would now like to turn towards the diversity that exists in our culture from within. Bangladesh is not a very big country, area wise. But if we scrutinise closely we will see that this land embellishes millions of different cultural shades among people across the nation. It is indeed surprising to note that each district of our country has its own dialect. Where each dictionary word is pronounced in an entirely different way. Therefore, Bhawaiya of the North and Bhatiyali of the South are two different genre of music that coexists famously here. Similarly, the Baul songs of Lalou Shai coming from Centre-west of Bangladesh travel the entire nation with alacrity mingling with many forms of popular folk music. Jatra is one of the oldest forms of dramatic art that ruled over our part of the world and is still very popular in both urban and rural Bangladesh. Narrative medium like Jari, Shari, Puthi Path and Kobi gaan add to the diversity in that, that each one of these has its own dugout all over rural Bangladesh. A point that merits mention here is the fact that though we have in our urban performances drawn inspiration from the world culture, the content remained very indigenous. This exercise also contributed to the element of diversity in our culture. In conclusion of this brief review of the cultural scenario of Bangladesh, we would be able to comprehend that the land is full of diverse artistic practices both in form and in content. This tiny land with ever so enthusiastic population is eager to assimilate culture of the world that they are exposed to and in combination with their home grown artistic expression present to the world a new wave of culture-fest for understanding and absorption. As our great poet Rabindranath Tagore had

said, “তু দেব আর তু নেব, তু মেলাবে তু মিলিব”. Translated into English, it would sound like, “thou shalt give and thou shalt receive” for the greater glory of humankind.

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Race and Ethnicity

It's common to see the terms "race" and "ethnicity" used interchangeably, but, generally speaking, the meanings are distinct. Race is usually seen as biological, referring to the physical characteristics of a person, while ethnicity is viewed as a social science construct that describes a person's cultural identity. Ethnicity can be displayed or hidden, depending on individual preferences, while racial identities are always on display, to a greater or lesser degree.

Differences between Race and Ethnicity

- Ethnicity can be displayed or hidden, while race generally cannot be.
- Ethnicity can be adopted, ignored, or broadened, while racial characteristics cannot.
- Ethnicity has subcategories, while races no longer do.
- Both have been used to subjugate or persecute people.
- Some sociologists believe that racial divisions are based more on sociological concepts than biological principles.

What Is Race?

Interestingly, there is no biological basis for racial classification. Indeed, delineating or separating people into different races is a sociological concept that seeks to segregate humans based on similar skin color and physical appearance. Yet, members of different "races" usually have only relatively

minor differences in such morphology—a branch of biology dealing with the form and structure of animals and plants—and in genetics.

All humans belong to the same species (*Homo sapiens*) and subspecies (*Homo sapiens sapiens*), but small genetic variations trigger varying physical appearances. Though humans often are subdivided into races, the actual morphological variations don't indicate major differences in DNA. The DNA of two humans chosen at random generally varies by less than 0.1%. Because racial genetic differences aren't strong, some scientists describe all humans as belonging to a single race: the human race. Indeed, in a March 2020 article in the anthropology journal *Sapiens*, Alan Goodman, a professor of biological anthropology at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, noted that "Race is real, but it's not genetic," adding that:

"For over 300 years, socially defined notions of 'race' have shaped human lives around the globe—but the category has no biological foundation."

What Is Ethnicity?

Ethnicity is the term used for the culture of people in a given geographic region or of people who descended from natives of that region. It includes their language, nationality, heritage, religion, dress, and customs. An Indian-American woman might display her ethnicity by wearing a sari, bindi, and henna hand art, or she could conceal it by wearing Western garb.

Being a member of an ethnic group involves following some or all of those cultural practices. Members of an ethnicity tend to identify with each other based on these shared traits.

Examples of ethnicity include being labeled as Irish, Jewish, or Cambodian, regardless of race. Ethnicity is considered an anthropological term because it is based on learned behaviors, not biological factors. Many people have mixed cultural backgrounds and can share in more than one ethnicity.

Race vs. Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity can overlap. For example, a Japanese-American would probably consider herself a member of the Japanese or Asian race, but, if she doesn't engage in any practices or customs of her ancestors, she might not identify with the ethnicity, instead considering herself an American.

Another way to look at the difference is to consider people who share the same ethnicity. Two people might identify their ethnicity as American, yet one is a Black person and the other is White. A person born of Asian descent growing up in Britain might identify racially as Asian and ethnically as British.

When Italian, Irish, and Eastern European immigrants began arriving in the United States, they weren't considered part of the White race. This widely accepted view led to restrictions of immigration policies and on the entrance of “non-White” immigrants.

Around the start of the 20th century, people from various regions were considered to be members of sub-categories of the White race, such as “Alpine” and “Mediterranean” races. These categories passed out of existence, and people from these groups began to be accepted into the wider “White” race, though some retained distinction as ethnic groups.

The idea of an ethnic group can also be broadened or narrowed. While Italian-Americans are thought of as an ethnic group in the United States, some Italians identify more with their regional origins than their national ones. Rather than view themselves as Italians, they consider themselves Sicilian. Nigerians who recently moved to the U.S. might identify more with their specific group from within Nigeria—Igbo, Yoruba, or Fulani, for example—than their nationality. They might have completely different customs from African Americans who descended from formerly enslaved people and whose families have been in the U.S. for generations.

Some researchers believe that the concepts of both race and ethnicity have been socially constructed because their definitions change over time, based on public opinion. The belief that race is due to genetic differences and biological morphologies gave way to racism, the idea of superiority and inferiority based on race, they charge. Persecution based on ethnicity, however, also has been common.

'Race: The Power of Illusion'

New York University sociology professor Dalton Conley spoke to PBS about the difference between race and ethnicity for the program “Race: The Power of an Illusion”:

“The fundamental difference is that race is socially imposed and hierarchical. There is an inequality built into the system. Furthermore, you have no control over your race; it’s how you’re perceived by others.”

Conley, like other sociologists, argues that ethnicity is more fluid and crosses racial lines:

“I have a friend who was born in Korea to Korean parents, but as an infant, she was adopted by an Italian family in Italy. Ethnically, she feels Italian: She eats Italian food, she speaks Italian, she knows Italian history and culture. She knows nothing about Korean history and culture. But when she comes to the United States, she’s treated racially as Asian.”

Race refers to the concept of dividing people into groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics and the process of ascribing social meaning to those groups. Ethnicity describes the culture of people in a given geographic region, including their language, heritage, religion and customs.

Comparison chart

Ethnicity versus Race comparison chart

	Ethnicity	Race
Definition	An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population group whose members identify with each other on the basis of common nationality or shared cultural traditions.	The term race refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics (which usually result from genetic ancestry).
Significance	Ethnicity connotes shared cultural traits and a shared group history. Some ethnic groups also share linguistic or religious traits, while others share a common group history but not a common language or <u>religion</u> .	Race presumes shared biological or genetic traits, whether actual or asserted. In the early 19th century, racial differences were ascribed significance in areas of intelligence, health, and personality. There is no evidence validating these ideas.
Genealogy	Ethnicity is defined in terms of shared genealogy, whether actual or presumed. Typically, if people believe they descend from a particular group, and they want to be associated with that group, then they are in fact members of that group.	Racial categories result from a shared genealogy due to geographical isolation. In the modern world this isolation has been broken down and racial groups have mixed.

Ethnicity versus Race comparison chart

	Ethnicity	Race
Distinguishing Factors	Ethnic groups distinguish themselves differently from one time period to another. They typically seek to define themselves but also are defined by the <u>stereotypes</u> of dominant groups.	Races are assumed to be distinguished by skin color, facial type, etc. However, the scientific basis of racial distinctions is very weak. Scientific studies show that racial genetic differences are weak except in skin color.
Nationalism	In 19th century, there was development of the political ideology of ethnic nationalism -- creating nations based on a presumed shared ethnic origins (e.g. Germany, Italy, Sweden...)	In 19th century, the concept of nationalism was often used to justify the domination of one race over another within a specific nation.
Legal System	In the last decades of the 20th century, in the U.S. and in most nations, the <u>legal system</u> as well as the official ideology prohibited ethnic-based discrimination.	In the last decades of the 20th century, the legal system as well as the official ideology emphasized racial equality.
Conflicts	Often brutal conflicts between ethnic groups have existed throughout <u>history</u> and across the world. But most ethnic groups in fact get along peacefully within one another in most nation's most of the time.	Racial prejudice remains a continuing problem throughout the world. However, there are fewer race-based conflicts in the 21st century than in the past.
Examples of conflict	Conflict between <u>Tamil and Sinhalese</u> populations in Sri Lanka, or the Hutu and Tutsi people in Rwanda.	Conflict between white and African-American people in the U.S., especially during the civil rights movement.

Definitions of Ethnicity and Race

What is ethnicity?

Ethnicity is state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.^[1] This is, by definition, a fluid concept; ethnic groups can be broadly or narrowly construed. For example, they can be as broad as "Native American" or as narrow as "Cherokee". Another example is the Indian subcontinent — Indians may be considered one ethnic group but there are actually dozens of cultural traditions and subgroups like Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, and Tamil that are also bona fide ethnic groups. Yet another example is people in Great Britain — they may be considered British, or more precisely English, Scottish or Welsh.

What is race?

A race is a group of people with a common *physical* feature or features. While there are hundreds — if not thousands — of ethnicities, the number of races is far fewer.

Difference between Race and Ethnicity

Take the [Caucasian \(a.k.a., Caucasoid\) race](#). The physical characteristics of Caucasians were described by M. A. MacConaill, an Irish anatomy professor, as including "light skin and eyes, narrow noses, and thin lips. Their hair is usually straight or wavy." Caucasians are said to have the lowest degree of projection in their alveolar [bones](#) that contain the teeth, a notable size prominence of the cranium and forehead region, and a projection of the midfacial region. A person whose appearance matches these characteristics is said to be a Caucasian. [Caucasians don't always have white skin](#) but in the United States "caucasian" is commonly used to mean white people.

Caucasians are found in many countries around the world. So while a Caucasian person in the United States may share certain racial characteristics with a Caucasian person from France, the two people have different ethnic backgrounds — one American, the other French. They will likely speak different languages most of the time, have different traditions, and may even have different beliefs that have been heavily influenced by their local cultures.

It is worth noting that "race" and "ethnicity" can be highly subjective, with lines between the two concepts frequently blurred. The video below discusses how terms for racial and ethnic identities have changed over the years and how a racial or ethnic term may not accurately describe a person's identity, as the person may have multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Multiracial vs. Multicultural

In most cases, race is unitary — i.e., a person belongs to one race — but may claim ethnic membership in multiple groups. For example, Barack Obama is racially black in spite of his mother being caucasian. On the other hand, a person can self-identify ethnically as Scottish and German if she has indeed lived in both ethnic groups.

Self-identification and Choice

Another difference between race and ethnicity is related to the ability to self-identify. A person does not choose her race; it is assigned by society based upon her physical features. However, ethnicity is self-identified. An individual can learn a language, social norms and customs, and assimilate into a culture to belong to an ethnic group.

Race relations

"Race relations" is one of the dominant themes in American politics from time to time, and refers to relationships between the major race groups — white, black, native American, Hispanic/Latino, "Asian," and others of mixed races.

America has also had a sometimes troubled history with ethnic strife — e.g., during the waves of Irish and Italian immigration to the U.S. These immigrants were Caucasian but had a different ethnicity compared to the Anglo Saxons who preceded them; they often faced ethnic discrimination.

"Asians"

The word "Asian" used in a racial context in the United States refers to people of Southeast Asian origin, including a vast variety of ethnic backgrounds, such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese.

This colloquial usage is incorrect because "Asian" is not technically a race, as it means *someone from Asia*, including people from India, Saudi Arabia, Israel and parts of Russia.

Ethnic diversity and cultural hegemony in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is often perceived and represented as a homogeneous country in terms of language, culture and ethnicity. Officially – as articulated in present constitution of the country – it is a state of one people, the 'Bangalee' nation, which recognizes just one language, Bangla, and one 'national culture'. But from sociolinguistic or anthropological perspectives, this imposed homogeneity begins to break down if we take into account the diversity of actual speech forms and cultural variations that exist among Bengalis of Bangladesh across geographical, class and religious boundaries. Moreover, the country also has many ethnic groups that may be small in terms of population sizes, but represent a rich storehouse of cultural and linguistic diversity. The ways in which this diversity has been largely left out from the conception of the Bangladeshi nation-state constitutes our subject matter, which is treated for its potential relevance for South Asia as a whole.

There has been an attempt, through the 15th constitutional amendment of 2011, to accord recognition to the ethnic minorities of Bangladesh. But the specific provision involved remains mired in terminological issues that bring to light hegemonic tendencies and colonial baggage of the mindset of the elites of Bangladesh. This is particularly the case in terms of singular and exclusionist conceptions of key notions such as 'nationality', 'nationalism', 'state language' and 'national culture', whereby the diversity of languages and ethnic identities of the country are overlooked, or at best relegated to a marginal and inferior

status. Against this backdrop, this paper examines how and why the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Bangladesh remains largely excluded from dominant nationalist representations of the country's history and identity. It is argued that this exclusion results from prevailing forms of cultural hegemony perpetuated by the country's elites, and their hegemonic views in turn rest on colonialist notions that continue to operate within South Asia as a whole.

An overview of ethnic and linguistic diversity in Bangladesh

Ethnically, the overwhelming majority of the people of Bangladesh are considered to be Bengali, an identification that has made this label (with variant spelling) largely synonymous with 'nationality' or national identity of all Bangladeshis. At least this is how the present constitution of the country treats the matter. However, it is common knowledge that in Bangladesh there are many ethnic minority groups that do not think of themselves as Bengalis, or have Bangla as their first languages. Officially there are no well-established figures as to the exact number and populations of such ethnic minorities. The number of ethnic groups mentioned in different sources range from 27 to way over 50, with their combined population constituting a small share, between 1% to 2%, of the total population of the country. Living in scattered pockets in different parts of the country, with significant concentrations in areas along or near international borders, most of these groups have ethnic kinsfolk across the border in India and/or Myanmar. While the majority of these ethnic minorities self-identify as 'indigenous peoples', this is an identification that remains hotly contested in Bangladesh (Tripura 2014). Officially, as per the terminology introduced through the 15th amendment of the constitution undertaken in 2011, they are now referred to by different combinations of the following terms: 'tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities'.

Geographically and demographically, the heaviest concentration of ethnic diversity is found in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, where the self-identifying indigenous peoples are also known as Paharis or Hill People and Jummas (a term that originally meant 'jum-cultivator; cf. Tripura 2013) who are divided in 11 distinct ethnic groups – namely Bawm, Chak, Chakma, Khyang, Khumi, Lushai, Marma, Mro, Pangkhua, Tanchangya and Tripura – which have varying population sizes ranging from barely a thousand (Lushai) to over four lakhs (Chakma, the largest ethnic minority group of Bangladesh). A few of these groups are found in other parts of Bangladesh as well (e.g. the Tripuras, who live in scattered pockets in Chittagong, Comilla and Sylhet as well), and most groups have ethnic kinfolds in India and/or Myanmar. Outside of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the main areas with significant presence of indigenous peoples include the north-west (Rajshahi and Dinajpur divisions), central north (Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions), north-east (Sylhet division), and coastal areas in the southeast/south (Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions). The ethnic groups found in these areas include Barman, Banai, Dalu, Garo or Mandi, Hajong, Khasi,

Koch, Mahali, Mahato, Malo, Manipuri, Munda, Oraon, Pahan, Patro, Rajowar, Rakhine, Santal, just to mention some of the better-known groups.

...

In terms of socioeconomic status, the ethnic minorities of Bangladesh tend to lag considerably behind aggregate national trends. While detailed disaggregated data relating to the ethnic minorities are hard to come by, their disadvantaged condition is generally acknowledged in different official documents. While the problem has been known generally for decades, and some special measures to address the situation have been included in official development strategies, plans, programs and various national policies formulated by successive governments, there has been little progress on the ground to date.

Linguistically, most of the self-identifying indigenous peoples (*adibashis*) speak distinct speech forms that are quite different from Bangla. Collectively, the languages of these ethnic minorities represent all the major 'language families' found in South Asia, namely Indo-Aryan (Bishnupriya Manipuri, Chakma, Hajong, Sadri, Tanchangya), Austro-Asiatic (e.g. Khasi, Santali), Tibeto-Burman (e.g. Chak, Garo, Khumi, Kokborok, Marma, Mro, Meitei, Rakhine) and Dravidian (Kurukh, spoken by some Oraons). At present, this linguistic diversity is not recognized anywhere in the constitution of Bangladesh. It should be added that apart from the self-identifying indigenous peoples, there are also the so-called Biharis – non-Bengali Muslim communities that speak Urdu or other variants of Hindustani languages such as Bhojpuri – who remain extremely marginalized in terms of their national identity and civil rights.

Bengali hegemony and the denial of diversity in Bangladesh

Although Bengali nationalism was the main driving force of Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971, it was by no means a struggle of Bengalis only. Instead, numerous individuals and communities belonging to ethnic minority groups throughout the country took active part in the war, which they saw as a rejection of the idea of Pakistan, defined as a state for Muslims, an identification that had left most of them out. Like the Bengalis generally, they were also inspired by visions of socioeconomic emancipation. However, for the ethnic minorities, the newly independent Bangladesh did not turn out to be an inclusive state as it came to be defined as a 'nation of Bengalis'. In addition to denying the distinct identities of ethnic minorities, the constitution of 1972 provided for no constitutional safeguards for them except for an indirect cover under a vague and demeaning category called 'backward segments of society'. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in the backdrop of fresh wounds experienced by the indigenous hill peoples due to two major shocks in the early 1960s – the lifting of the special ('excluded') status of the region and the building of the Kaptai Hydro-electric –

the denial of their identities and aspirations in the newly independent Bangladesh would soon lead them to wage an armed movement for regional autonomy.

...

From the point of view of those in power at present, Article 23A of the Constitution, titled 'The Culture of Tribes, Minor Races and Ethnic Sects and Communities' (introduced through the 15th amendment in 2011), is presented as responding to the demands by self-identifying 'indigenous peoples' for their constitutional recognition. It is true that this clause represents the first ever attempt to acknowledge within the constitution the existence of minority ethnic groups in Bangladesh. However, from the point of view of indigenous peoples, this accommodation is hardly acceptable since it uses terms deemed derogatory (e.g. 'tribes' and 'minor races') in lieu of the desired category 'indigenous people'. Furthermore, even if the actual terms used are ignored, the recognition accorded is actually largely negated by problematic formulations elsewhere in the constitution, e.g. in Article 6, which states that 'the people of Bangladesh will be known as Bengalees as a nation'. This statement is further elaborated through singular notions of nationhood, national language and culture, e.g. in Article 9, which is reproduced below:[\[2\]](#)

The unity and solidarity of the Bangalee nation, which, deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Bangalee nationalism.

Taken together, formulations such as those indicated above offer no proper recognition of the diversity of cultures, languages and ethnicities that exist in Bangladesh. Even Article 23A, which talks about preservation and promotion of 'local culture and tradition' (note the singular nouns) of the 'tribes, minor races, and ethnic sects and communities', deploys the term 'culture' in a very narrow sense, without any mention of the distinct languages, livelihoods and land rights of the indigenous peoples. On the whole, rather than foreshadowing any new laws, Article 23A is actually nothing but a gist of the National Culture Policy formulated in 2006, when Bangladesh Nationalist Party – which promotes what it calls 'Bangladeshi nationalism' – was in power.

It may be noted that in the National Culture Policy 2006, the main term used to refer to the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh is 'tribal' (i.e. its Bangla equivalent), although another term (*nritattwik jonogosthi*) that literally means 'ethnological or anthropological people' is also used, though its intended meaning is *nrigosthi*, i.e. 'race' or 'ethnic group'. Regardless of the terminology used, the indigenous peoples (i.e. tribal or ethnic minority groups) do receive mention in

several key areas, e.g., in sections on the objectives of the policy, the principles underlying it, and the strategies and institutions involved. This policy generally refers to ethnic and cultural diversity of the country, and there are quite extensive sections devoted to the indigenous peoples. However, while the need to promote and protect the cultures of the indigenous peoples are acknowledged, there is more prominence given on Bangla language and 'Bangalee' culture as constituting the 'mainstream', and there is also explicit reference to the need to make the indigenous peoples more familiar with and 'involved' (or 'immersed') in the mainstream. There is also a fairly lengthy section dealing with various 'tribal' academies and institutes that were set up mostly during the rule of General Ziaur Rahman. It may be mentioned that it is these institutions that have been renamed as Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutes through the similarly named act of 2010. Despite the apparent differences between Bengali vs. Bangladeshi nationalisms, from the perspectives of the indigenous peoples, there is little to choose from, with both brands of nationalism seeing the ethnic minorities as the 'other', and seeking to assimilate them to the national mainstream. There is also similarity at another level among governments subscribing to different notions of nationhood. The 'cultures' (defined narrowly, consisting of items such as staged performances of dances, songs etc.) of indigenous peoples have been viewed as exotic resources and potential 'tourist attraction' waiting to be exploited for commercial gains.

The Bengali-centric views reflected in legal and policy provisions as noted above are perpetuated through various means, including in representations in school textbooks. For example, let us consider the first article in a school textbook for fifth graders, in Bangla, titled *My Bangla Book*. Bearing a title that may be translated as 'This country and its people', this article begins with the statement, 'It is our great fortune that we have been born in this country. We are the Bengalis of Bangladesh.' This statement is immediately followed by an explanation as to what it means to speak of 'Bengalis of Bangladesh.' It asks, 'Are there Bengalis outside of Bangladesh?' To answer the question, the young readers taken on a imaginary train ride up to Akhaura station, which is situated right across the India-Bangladesh border near Agartala, Tripura. In the 2013 edition of the textbook, the reader is informed that 'all the inhabitants of Tripura are Bengalis'. When the erroneous nature of this statement was pointed out in the social media, subsequent editions of the textbook corrected the statement by saying, 'many of the inhabitants of Tripura are Bengalis'. Later, the article goes on to talk about other ethnic groups that live in Bangladesh, and declares that the whole point of the article is to emphasize the beauty and value of ethnic and cultural diversity that exist in the country. No other change has been made in the article. No one has apparently raised the question, why should an article that is meant to highlight diversity start with the statement, 'We are fortunate to have been born as Bengalis of Bangladesh' (Tripura 2015)! This is just one of countless manifestations of Bengali cultural hegemony that pervades through numerous school textbooks,

literary creations, and representations in popular media along with the kinds of legal and policy provisions noted above.

It goes without saying that the hegemonic nature of Bengali views towards the ethnic minorities is not without material underpinnings. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts as well as in the rest of the country, the Indigenous peoples have faced large scale loss of their ancestral lands, a process that started during the Pakistan period, but accelerated in independent Bangladesh. A host of different factors, ranging from illegal land grabbing by powerful people, application of the vested property act, and major land acquisitions by different government agencies for various purposes, have been behind this development. To take one specific example, it has been reported that in case of the Garo people, “three-fourths of the total dispossession has occurred after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971” (Barakat, Hoque, Halim and Osman 2008:173).

Colonial roots of nationalist Bengali hegemony

Much has been written about how linguistic nationalisms represent relatively recent phenomena throughout the world, representing ‘imagined communities’ constructed by literate classes of people under what Anderson (1983) calls ‘print capitalism’. In case of Bengali nationalism, we can find its earlier expressions in what used to be ‘undivided Bengal’ under British colonial rule, although the process took on a new life, shape and historic turn in the post-colonial period within the framework of the state of Pakistan. The Bengali nationalism that spread and took roots in what used to be East Pakistan drew heavily on the literature produced by the Bengali *bhadralok* class that had come into being around Kolkata under British rule.

Among students of anthropology, it is common knowledge that in the nineteenth century, the concept of culture was based on an evolutionist paradigm that distinguished between different stages of culture, from ‘lower’ or ‘primitive’ to ‘higher’ and ‘civilized’. Although such evolutionist notions, including the practice of calling contemporary societies ‘primitive’ would soon become unfashionable as well as conceptually untenable within anthropology, the same ideas and practices continued in different guises among newly emergent literate elite classes in different parts of the world. In this regard, Bengal or British India as a whole was no exception. In fact, the very word chosen as synonymous with culture in Bangla and several other South Asian languages including Hindi carries the older evolutionist meaning to the term. The word we have in mind is *sanskriti*, a term that is based on a notion of refinement and is often equated with categories such as ‘fine arts’.

It is said to be common knowledge that Rabindranth Tagore had a strong aversion to the word ‘*krishti*’ as a synonym for ‘culture’, apparently because it invoked the drudgery of agricultural work instead of the refinement and civilized achievement suggested by the term ‘*sanskriti*’ (cf. Sartori 2008:3). In Tagore’s own words, in

a lecture that he delivered in English in 1919, we can find clear signs of his evolutionist understanding of the notion of culture (Tagore 2003: Section IX).

*In the **earlier stage** of her culture the whole of Europe had Latin for her language of learning. It was like her intellectual **bud-time**, when all her petals of self-expression were closed into one point. But the **perfection of her mental unfolding** was not represented by that oneness of her literary vehicle. [Emphasis added]*

We will come back to Tagore later, but for now let us turn our attention to another set of notions – that of ‘tribe’, ‘tribal society’, ‘hill tribe’ – that may be seen as representing older British colonialist/evolutionist views about the history and social makeup of the peoples of South Asia. As I argued in an older article of mine (Tripura 1992), in British India, the category ‘tribal’ was part of a larger constellation of colonialist ideas, images and categories that formed the British ‘Orientalist’ discourse on Indian society and history (cf. Said 1979). In this discourse the category ‘tribal’ was contrasted with various ‘non-tribal’ categories, e.g. ‘caste’, ‘Hindu’, ‘Indian’, ‘Bengali’ and so on. Coupled with the theory or ‘myth’ of Aryan invasion, the tribal/non-tribal dichotomy served to produce a racist interpretation of how the complex ethnic make-up of the subcontinent had come about. In this view, ‘Indo-European’ speaking ‘Aryan’ races came in successive waves to the subcontinent and over time formed the upper strata of the Hindu caste system; native races formed the lower strata; but there were also those who resisted being incorporated into the caste system, or simply remained outside of it due to ‘isolation’—the ‘tribal’ people. Thus, on the fringes of British Bengal, many of the so-called ‘hill tribes’ came to be viewed as ‘Tibeto-Burman’ speaking ‘Mongoloid’ ‘immigrants’ who had managed to live in relative isolation from the societies of the plains. Colonial administrators generally viewed the tribal people as ‘simple’ and vulnerable that needed protection against the ‘corrupting influence’ of the people of the plains. Thus they designated many ‘tribal’ inhabited areas as excluded or partially excluded for the purposes of settlement by ‘non-tribal’ communities. While some laws including such provisions have been removed or modified during the postcolonial periods, many of the extant policies and legal provisions relating to the indigenous peoples can still be traced back to British colonial rule (e.g. the CHT Regulation 1900 and State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950, which, in Section 97, contains ‘Restriction on alienation of lands of aboriginals’). From the point of view of the indigenous peoples, the ruling classes of the post-colonial nation-states simply inherited and carried on with the same colonial mindset as the British in many ways. Article 23A of the constitution, as amended in 2011, containing outmoded categories such ‘tribes and minor races’, is just one recent manifestation of this tendency.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

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Week-12

Culture and Development

For a variety of reasons, economists have avoided getting too closely involved with the concept of culture and its relationship to economic development. There is a general acceptance that culture must have a role in guiding a population along a particular path, but, as Landes (1998) points out, a discomfort with what can be construed as implied criticism of a particular culture has discouraged broader public discourse.

As we discuss in a recent [paper](#), the role of culture in economic development is not an easy subject to get a handle on. To start with, one faces issues of definition. The more all-encompassing the definition, the less helpful it tends to be in explaining patterns of development. Economists tend to narrowly define culture as “customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation” (Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales, 2006). This approach is largely dictated by the aim to identify causal relationships, by focusing on aspects of culture that are constant over time. Not surprisingly, some of the most insightful writing on the subject has been done by anthropologists. Murdock (1965) argues that a culture consists of habits that are shared by members of a society. It is the product of learning, not of heredity. Woolcock (2014) highlights how the sociologic scholarship has evolved to consider culture as “shaping a repertoire or ‘tool kit’ of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’” (Swidler, 1986, p.273).

A second complication is that even with a sensible definition, one would have to confront the fact that cultural identity is not fixed. Cultural change—anthropologists tell us—begins with processes of innovation, of which cultural borrowing or diffusion is by far the most common. But it can also be precipitated by social acceptance, by selective elimination and by integration.

From a policy perspective, malleable aspects of culture are more interesting as they open up the possibility for intervention. The World Bank’s [2015 World](#)

[Development Report](#) cites a number of examples of interventions that have determined a cultural change to trigger improvements in welfare: one example is political affirmative action for women in West Bengal.

There are other complications, however, in attempting to use cultural explanations for economic development.

Huntington (2000) remarks how in the early 1960s Ghana and Korea were broadly comparable in terms of income per capita, structure of production, and foreign aid. Thirty years later the contrast could not be more pronounced. According to Huntington, culture had a major role in explaining it: “South Koreans valued thrift, investment, hard work, education, organization, and discipline. Ghanaians had different values. In short, cultures count. The problem with this formulation is that it does not provide a very auspicious basis to start a dialogue with Ghana as to how they could catch up with Korea. Not surprisingly, international financial organizations and bilateral donors have shied away from framing the debate in terms of cultural norms.

Beyond issues of presentation, it is possible that “culture”, in fact, disguises other forces at work, more amenable to change. How much of the Ghana’s stunted development is simply the result of bad policies? In many developing countries investors are unwilling to plan for the long-term because of the risks associated with political instability. What may appear to be cultural traits may, in fact, be behaviors shaped by economic incentives and thus amenable to change through changes in the underlying incentives. So, to take an example, the absence of a work ethic in the Soviet Union was not a reflection of some ingrained cultural trait, but rather was a natural response to an environment in which wage differentials were extremely narrow, promotion was not linked to performance, and life-time employment was more or less guaranteed. People’s behaviour at work was totally consistent with this particular set of dis-incentives.

Sachs (2000) identifies a number of factors which have fundamentally affected development in various parts of the world and can be detached from conceptions of culture. He notes, for instance, the (dis)advantages of geography, such as access to natural resources, being landlocked or part of a poor, volatile neighborhood. Easterly (2006) discusses the heavy burden on Africa associated with the historically arbitrary demarcation of international borders. Poverty may have more to do with geography and climate, with natural resource management, and with the toxic interactions between ethnic diversity and artificial borders, than with purely cultural factors.

As a result of globalization, because “citizens are more exposed to successful behaviors elsewhere” ([Porter, 1990 p. 26](#)), geography, climate, and natural

resources are gradually giving way to knowledge, education, and access to new technologies as the key drivers of productivity and economic growth. We are witnessing the gradual emergence of a universal, global culture based on such values as adherence to civil and human rights, gender equality, respect for property rights, the rule of law, acceptance of market forces as a mechanism for resource allocation.

In saying that education and the acquisition of knowledge and skills are desirable development objectives we are making a statement that holds true across different regions of the world, that applies to all contemporary civilizations. Of course, societies will differ in the ways and the extent to which they have internalized some of these values in their policies, their traditions and their institutions. Acceptance of the desirability of gender equality, for instance, does not mean that inequalities and injustices based on gender—deeply entrenched in all our cultures, to a greater or lesser extent—will suddenly disappear. But few would disagree with the thesis that gender disparities are out of step with modernity and that their presence retards human progress. Development is not only about reducing poverty and expanding opportunities against the background of rising incomes. It is also in a very fundamental way about adopting a set of values that are compatible with humanity's moral development.

What role is there for cultural relations in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030?

As the UK's international organisation for cultural relations, we believe it is important to examine how the British Council can contribute to major global initiatives, turning to national and international policy frameworks for guidance.

In the **UN Agenda 2030** the primary objective is to end poverty everywhere under the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

To achieve this by 2030, all 193 UN member states (including the UK) committed to implementing 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) at a domestic and international level. The goals are universal and mutually reinforcing, focusing on the five Ps:

- people
- planet
- prosperity
- peace
- Partnerships.

To measure progress towards the 17 ambitious goals – including quality education, gender equality, climate action, and peace – each goal has a set of targets and indicators. Nations report to the UN High Level Political Forum through voluntary national reviews, which the **UK completed** last year.

With ten years left to achieve the goals, what role can the British Council play in contributing to the SDGs at home and overseas?

Since the adoption of the UN Agenda 2030 back in 2015, we have been creating useful new knowledge about the link between cultural relations and the sustainable development goals.

In 2016, we commissioned a baseline study to look into our portfolio of programmes and the evidence of impact. The same year, we held an **exhibition** at our London office entitled 'The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Facing up to the big global challenges', which also travelled to the **European Development Days** in Brussels.

Since then, we have conducted specific analysis of SDG 16 on how '**Cultural relations contributes to peace, justice and stronger institutions**'. We also partnered with International Alert to launch a peace perceptions poll, and have produced a briefing on '**How SDG 16 can help salvage the 2030 Agenda in the wake of COVID-19**'.

In September, we shared our report '**The Missing Pillar: Culture's contribution to the SDGs**', which aims to highlight the value of arts and culture – as a sector and in its widest sense – for sustainable development. It provides case studies of 11 of our programmers around the world, tackling a variety of issues and cutting across sectors, such as sustainable fashion, creative and inclusive economies, and the protection of cultural heritage in communities and fragile contexts.

*The **Cultural Protection Fund**, in partnership with the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has awarded over £35 million to 81*

projects across 17 different countries in Western Asia and North and East Africa, which foster, safeguard and promote the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage at risk for social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Most recently, we have published a **rigorous review of evidence on the role of tertiary education in development**. It highlights that post-compulsory education can make a positive contribution to economic and non-economic development in a variety of ways. The study also highlights what more can be done to unlock the power of tertiary education through better understanding of context and stronger local and international collaboration.

What does our research and practice tell us?

There is recognition that the SDGs are thematically relevant to our cultural relations work, be it in the field of culture, education, youth and skills.

Partnership is at the heart of what we do, and we share the values of the SDGs of caring for people, planet, prosperity and peace.

There is therefore clear alignment and further potential for the British Council to contribute to the SDGs as part of the UK's response and to see them as a framework for cultural relations.

Having said that, although the SDGs advocate for collaboration with the private sector and civil society, the way they are framed can make it challenging for these stakeholders to engage with the aspirational policy goals on a practical and local level.

The language of the SDG targets and indicators are mainly aimed at governments and based on gathering national level statistics and data. Not only is this information difficult to access and capture, it also limits how the wider impact of interventions can be measured, beyond the targets and indicators of a given goal.

This disconnect between policy and practice affects how nations can gather evidence and report on their achievement of the SDGs in voluntary national reviews and policy plans, largely relying on national statistics and government initiatives.

How do we bridge the gap, and ensure that the value of our cultural relations work with societies, economies and the environment is better understood?

Our research indicates several ways to link activity at a local level with global policies, including through:

- **Ensuring better access to the SDGs:** by becoming more familiar with the SDGs, organizations like the British Council can align our work with the goals and find common language to demonstrate the relevance and shared values of our global

cultural engagement. This approach requires an understanding of the different contexts in which we work, and engagement with local stakeholders to develop solutions that are inclusive and sustainable

- **Gathering better evidence:** whilst thematic alignment to the SDGs may seem obvious, more can be done to measure the value of cultural relations for social, economic and environmental wellbeing, especially in light of the COVID-19 recovery. Providing examples of how working in partnership through arts, education, youth and skills can contribute to quality education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), sustainable cities (SDG11), climate action (SDG13) and peacebuilding (SDG16), will help to facilitate a connection between practice and policy at home and overseas
- **Raising more awareness of cultural relations for sustainable development:** as advocated in the UN Agenda 2030, it takes a collective effort and systemic approach for humanity to reach these global goals. All parties have a role to play, and platforms and opportunities are needed to hear stories and amplify voices of those who are making an impact at a local level, contributing to achieving the SDGs at a global level.

University of Global Village (UGV)

Department of English

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Week-13

What Is Cultural Hegemony?

Cultural hegemony refers to domination or rule maintained through ideological or cultural means. It is usually achieved through social institutions, which allow those in power to strongly influence the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldviews, and behaviors of the rest of society.

Cultural hegemony functions by framing the worldview of the ruling class, and the social and economic structures that embody it, as just, legitimate, and designed for the benefit of all, even though these structures may only benefit the ruling class. This kind of power is distinct from rule by force, as in a military dictatorship, because it allows the ruling class to exercise authority using the "peaceful" means of ideology and culture.

Cultural Hegemony According to Antonio Gramsci

The Italian philosopher [Antonio Gramsci](#) developed the concept of cultural hegemony out of [Karl Marx's theory](#) that the dominant ideology of society reflects the beliefs and interests of the ruling class. Gramsci argued that consent to the rule of the dominant group is achieved by the spread of ideologies—beliefs, assumptions, and values—through social institutions such as schools, churches, courts, and the media, among others. These institutions do the [work of socializing people](#) into the norms, values, and beliefs of the dominant social group. As such, the group that controls these institutions controls the rest of society.

Cultural hegemony is most strongly manifested when those ruled by the dominant group come to believe that the economic and social conditions of their society are natural and inevitable, rather than created by people with a vested interest in particular social, economic, and political orders.

Gramsci developed the concept of cultural hegemony to explain why the [worker-led revolution that Marx predicted](#) in the previous century had not come to pass. Central to Marx's [theory of capitalism](#) was the belief that the destruction of this economic system was built into the system itself since capitalism is premised on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. Marx reasoned that workers could only take so much economic exploitation before they [would rise up and overthrow the ruling class](#). However, this revolution did not happen on a mass scale.

The Cultural Power of Ideology

Gramsci realized that there was more to the dominance of capitalism than the class structure and its exploitation of workers. Marx had recognized the important role that ideology played in reproducing the economic system and the social structure that supported it, but Gramsci believed that Marx had not given enough credit to the power of ideology. In his essay "[The Intellectuals](#)," written between 1929 and 1935, Gramsci described the power of ideology to reproduce the [social structure](#) through institutions such as religion and education. He argued that society's intellectuals, often viewed as detached observers of social life, are actually embedded in a privileged social class and enjoy great prestige. As such, they function as the "deputies" of the ruling class, teaching and encouraging people to follow the norms and rules established by the ruling class.

Gramsci elaborated on the role the education system plays in the process of achieving rule by consent, or cultural hegemony, in his essay "[On Education](#)."

The Political Power of Common Sense

In “The Study of Philosophy,” Gramsci discussed the role of “common sense”—dominant ideas about society and our place in it—in producing cultural hegemony. For example, the idea of “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps,”—the idea that one can succeed economically if one just tries hard enough—is a form of “common sense” that has flourished under capitalism, and that serves to justify the system. In other words, if one believes that all it takes to succeed is hard work and dedication, then it follows that the system of capitalism and the social structure that is organized around it is just and valid. It also follows that those who have succeeded economically have earned their wealth in a just and fair manner and that those who struggle economically, in turn, deserve their impoverished state. This form of “common sense” fosters the belief that success and social mobility are strictly the responsibility of the individual, and in doing so obscures the real class, racial, and gender inequalities that are built into the capitalist system.

In sum, cultural hegemony, or our tacit agreement with the way that things are, is a result of socialization, our experiences with social institutions, and our exposure to cultural narratives and imagery—all of which reflect the beliefs and values of the ruling class.

Cultural Hegemony

Cultural hegemony, a concept developed by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, refers to the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, which manipulates the culture and beliefs so their worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm. This phenomenon enables the ruling class to maintain power with minimal resistance by convincing the masses that the established ideology is natural and beneficial for everyone. Understanding cultural hegemony is crucial for examining how power structures are maintained and challenged through culture.

How does Gramsci suggest the ruling class exerts influence?

- A. By solely relying on economic policies and wealth distribution.
- B. Through cultural means, such as media and education.
- C. Only by

enforcing laws that restrict freedom of speech.D. Through manipulating foreign governments using trade agreements.

What does Cultural Hegemony explain?

A. How power is maintained through subtle cultural control.B. The role of local traditions in overpowering global trends.C. The impact of technological advancements on culture.D. How power is maintained through military force.

What is the core concept of Cultural Hegemony?

A. Ensuring all cultural expressions are equal and freely exchanged across society.B. Complete eradication of class distinctions, leading to a classless society.C. A voluntary agreement among all classes to adhere to shared cultural values.D. Domination of a diverse society by the ruling class, imposing their worldview as the cultural norm.

Cultural Hegemony Definition

Understanding **Cultural Hegemony** is crucial for comprehending how societal norms and structures are established and perpetuated. This concept helps you explore the dynamics of power and culture in shaping our world.

Core Concept of Cultural Hegemony

Cultural Hegemony refers to the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the culture of that society — the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values — so that their imposed worldview becomes accepted as the cultural norm.

This concept was developed by the Italian Marxist philosopher **Antonio Gramsci**, and it describes how the state and ruling capitalist class, known as the bourgeoisie, use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. Here are some key points:

- The ruling class imposes its values and perceptions, making these seem to be the standard and universally valid.
- The subordinate classes accept these [cultural norms](#), viewing them as beneficial.
- Cultural hegemony is maintained through social institutions like education, media, and religion.

Understanding these [aspects](#) helps you analyze how culture shapes political and social realities.

An example of cultural hegemony could be the widespread acceptance of Western consumer culture across the world. This encompasses values like individualism and materialism becoming dominant even in non-Western societies. For instance, the global popularity of fast-food chains like McDonald's represents a cultural influence that suits corporate interests while shaping consumer habits around the world.

Always look for underlying power structures when analyzing cultural trends, as they may reveal how certain practices are maintained over time through cultural hegemony.

Gramsci Cultural Hegemony

The concept of **Cultural Hegemony** by Antonio Gramsci is an essential framework for understanding power dynamics within societies. It offers insight into how dominant cultures assert influence and maintain control, subtly shaping norms and beliefs without the use of force. Exploring this concept helps you recognize the intricate ways culture intersects with politics.

Understanding Gramsci's Theory

Gramsci's Cultural Hegemony is a theoretical framework explaining how the ruling class maintains control over society by making its worldview the universally accepted cultural norm.

Gramsci proposed that the ruling class doesn't only rely on political power or coercion; instead, it exerts influence through cultural means. You can find evidence of this in

- Media: Television, films, and digital platforms often reflect and propagate the dominant cultural values.
- Education: Curricula can be designed to reinforce specific viewpoints and skillsets aligned with the ruling class.
- Religion: Religious institutions may support the status quo, promoting ideals beneficial to those in power.

This subtle domination is often so pervasive that the population internalizes and accepts it as the norm.

Consider the global spread and influence of American popular culture. The dominance of Hollywood movies, pop music, and fashion trends often promotes ideals such as consumerism and liberty, aligning with capitalist ideologies that benefit the ruling class.

To delve deeper into this concept, it's enlightening to examine how Gramsci's ideas have influenced contemporary critiques and discussions around globalization and cultural imperialism. Critics argue that powerful nations project their culture globally, maintaining economic and political control by promoting their cultural products and norms. This global cultural exchange has been scrutinized for potentially eroding local cultures and traditions, presenting a modern twist on Gramsci's original theory of cultural hegemony. Countries might adopt foreign technologies and fashion, but this shift might lead to the loss of traditional practices and languages.

Not every cultural exchange is a form of hegemony. It's important to differentiate between voluntary cultural adoption and imposed cultural dominance.

Cultural Hegemony Theory Explained

Cultural Hegemony is a theory that explains how power is maintained in a diverse society through subtle cultural control rather than direct force. This concept provides a lens for analyzing how societal norms are established and perpetuated by dominant groups.

Key Elements of Cultural Hegemony

- The ruling class uses cultural institutions such as media, education, and religion to establish their values as the status quo.
- Subordinate classes come to accept these values as the natural order, often internalizing and perpetuating them.
- This form of social control is less overt and coercive and relies heavily on the power of persuasion and cultural narrative.

Understanding these elements helps you identify how power operates quietly and pervasively within cultures.

For example, the widespread acceptance of capitalist values like consumerism is seen as a result of cultural hegemony. The global popularity of Western brands and lifestyles reflects the dominant cultures' influence, shaping consumer behavior worldwide.

Think about how popular media often showcases specific lifestyles and values, subtly influencing societal norms and expectations.

Exploring the wider impact of Cultural Hegemony offers perspectives on issues such as globalization and cultural imperialism. While some view the global spread of culture as enriching, others critique it for overshadowing local traditions and practices. Many analysts argue that this ongoing process homogenizes diverse cultures, leading to a monolithic global culture dominated by capitalist ideologies. As societies worldwide adopt foreign cultural traits, valuable cultural diversity could diminish.

Cultural Hegemony Examples in Society

Cultural hegemony is a pervasive force in shaping societal norms and values. It manifests in various domains like literature, media, and education, influencing how people perceive the world and their place in it.

Cultural Hegemony and Literature

In literature, cultural hegemony can be observed through the narratives that become mainstream. These often reflect the views and values of the dominant class, subtly influencing readers' perceptions and beliefs. Some key [aspects](#) include:

- **Canonical Texts:** Most educational curriculums prioritize works from Western authors, promoting specific cultural values.
- **Representation:** The portrayal of cultures and characters can reinforce stereotypes or marginalize alternative narratives.

You can examine the impact of these narratives by exploring how they reinforce or challenge hegemonic ideals.

Consider the works of authors like Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. Their texts have become cultural touchstones, reinforcing values associated with Western elite society, such as class hierarchy and social decorum. By studying these works, you gain insight into the accepted norms and values during their time, which continue to influence modern society.

Explore diverse authors and global literature to gain a wider perspective beyond hegemonic narratives.

How Gramsci Cultural Hegemony Influences Modern Thought

Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary [discourse](#) and critical theory. It provides a framework for examining power dynamics and the subtle mechanisms through which dominant ideologies maintain control. Key influences include:

- **Critical Theory:** Analyzing societal constructs such as race, class, and gender through the lens of power dynamics.
- **Social Movements:** Movements challenge the status quo by revealing and confronting hegemonic practices.

These theories help you scrutinize [cultural norms](#) and explore avenues for societal change.

The spread of feminist theory, for instance, interrogates traditional gender roles that are often perpetuated by cultural hegemony. This critical perspective advocates for equality and challenges systemic inequalities through awareness and education.

Delving deeper, cultural studies and post-colonial criticism use Gramsci's theories to uncover hidden power structures within historical contexts. These fields examine how colonial powers imposed their cultures, creating lasting effects on colonized societies. By understanding these dynamics, it's possible to develop strategies that resist domination and promote cultural diversity. Such academic efforts aim to create a balanced global cultural [narrative](#) that respects and integrates various cultural voices and practices.

Cultural Hegemony Explained Through Media and Art

Media and art are powerful tools for disseminating cultural norms and values. They often reflect the interests of those in power, shaping public opinion and reinforcing dominant ideologies. Here are some ways cultural hegemony is perpetuated:

- **Film and Television:** Hollywood movies often depict Western ideals of success, beauty, and heroism.
- **Advertising:** Promotes consumer culture, aligning with capitalist interests by encouraging materialism and consumption.

When you engage with these media, consider how they might influence your perceptions and behaviors.

An example is the portrayal of family structures in television sitcoms. Western norms are presented as universal ideals, impacting audiences' perceptions of familial relationships.

Question the media narratives and consider alternative perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of reality.

Cultural Hegemony in Educational Contexts

Educational institutions play a significant role in perpetuating cultural hegemony through curriculum design and pedagogical approaches. They reinforce societal norms and values embedded in the dominant culture. Consider these aspects:

- **Curriculum Content:** Often prioritizes Western history, literature, and scientific achievements, potentially marginalizing other cultural contributions.
- **Language of Instruction:** Emphasizing dominant languages, such as English, can overshadow local languages and cultural heritage.

By analyzing these factors, you can identify how education both reflects and shapes cultural hegemony.

The prevalence of [standardized testing](#) in educational systems is an example of cultural hegemony. These tests often favor certain ways of thinking and learning, reflecting the values of the dominant culture and marginalizing students from different backgrounds.

Encourage inclusive education by advocating for diverse curricula and teaching methods that honor multiple perspectives.

Cultural Hegemony - Key takeaways

- **Cultural Hegemony Definition:** Domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture, making their worldview the accepted norm.
- **Antonio Gramsci:** An Italian Marxist philosopher who developed the concept of cultural hegemony, explaining how the ruling class maintains control through cultural means.
- **Cultural Hegemony Theory:** A framework that describes how societal norms are established and maintained by dominant groups through cultural control, not force.
- **Examples of Cultural Hegemony:** Western consumer culture, global popularity of brands like McDonald's, and the dominance of Hollywood promote capitalist ideologies.
- **Cultural Hegemony and Literature:** Mainstream literary narratives often reflect the dominant class's values, influencing perceptions and beliefs.
- **Influence on Media and Education:** Cultural hegemony is perpetuated through media depicting Western ideals and educational curricula emphasizing Western achievements.

University of Global Village (UGV)

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Week-14

What is an example of a diaspora?

A diaspora occurs when a community of people is dispersed or scattered from their native territory and settles in another geographic location. This scattering has happened several times in history, particularly in the African, Armenian, and Jewish communities.

What is another word for diaspora?

Another word for diaspora is scatter. The diaspora refers to the voluntary or involuntary scattering of people from their native land to another geographic location.

What are the biggest diasporas in the world?

The biggest diasporas in the world occurred in Africa, Israel, and Armenia. The African diaspora involved countless numbers of African people being sold into slavery in the Transatlantic slave trade and Arab slave trade. The Jewish diaspora in Israel involved thousands of Jews taken captive by the Babylonian army, and the Armenian diaspora occurred when oppression from the Ottoman Empire forced Armenians from their homeland.

What is the biggest modern diaspora?

The biggest modern diaspora is the Indian diaspora. Over 18 million people who call India their homeland live in other places around the world

Definition

The oldest known use of the word "diaspora" in English is in 1594 in John Stockwood's translation of Lambert Daneau's commentary on the Twelve Prophets. Daneau writes:

This scattering abroad of the Jewes, as it were an heavenly sowing, fell out after their returne from the captiuitie of Babylon. Wherevpon both Acts. 2. and also 1. Pet. 1. and 1. Iam. ver. 1. [sic] they are called *Diaspora*, that is, a scattering or sowing abroad.^[42]

However, the current entry on "diaspora" in the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* dates the first recorded use a century later to 1694, in a work on ordination by the Welsh theologian James Owen. Owen wanted to prove that there is no difference in the Bible between Presbyters and Bishops; he cited the example of the Jews in exile:

The Presbyters of the Jewish *Diaspora*, to whom St. *Peter* wrote, are requir'd ποιμαίνειν ἃ ἐπισκοπεῖν, to feed or rule the Flock, and to perform the office and work of Bishops among them.^[43]

The OED records a usage of "diaspora" in 1876, which refers to "extensive *diaspora* work (as it is termed) of evangelizing among the National Protestant Churches on the continent".^[44]

The term became more widely assimilated into English by the mid 1950s, with long-term expatriates in significant numbers from other particular countries or regions also being referred to as a diaspora.^[45] An academic field, diaspora studies, has become established relating to this sense of the word.

African diasporas

[edit]

Further information: African diaspora

The diaspora of Africans during the Atlantic slave trade is one of the most notorious modern diasporas. 10.7 million people from West Africa survived transportation to arrive in the Americas as slaves starting in the late 16th century

CE and continuing into the 19th.^[citation needed] Outside of the Atlantic slave trade, however, African diasporic communities have existed for millennia. While some communities were slave-based, other groups emigrated for various reasons.

From the 8th through the 19th centuries, the Arab slave trade dispersed millions of Africans to Asia and the islands of the Indian Ocean.^{[65][page needed]} The Islamic slave trade also has resulted in the creation of communities of African descent in India, most notably the Siddi, Makrani and Sri Lanka Kaffirs.^{[66][page needed]}

Beginning as early as the 2nd century AD, the kingdom of Aksum (modern-day Ethiopia) created colonies on the Arabian Peninsula. During the 4th century, Aksum formally adopted Christianity as a state religion, becoming the first to do so along with Armenia. In the 6th century, Kaleb of Axum invaded Himyar (modern-day Yemen) to aid and defend Christians under religious persecution. During these campaigns, several groups of soldiers chose not to return to Aksum. These groups are estimated to have ranged in size from the 600s to mid 3000s.^[67]

Previously, migrant Africans with national African passports could only enter thirteen African countries without advanced visas. In pursuing a unified future, the African Union (AU) launched an African Union Passport in July 2016, allowing people with a passport from one of the 55 member states of the AU to move freely between these countries under this visa free passport and encourage migrants with national African passports to return to Africa.^{[68][69][70]}

Asian diasporas

[edit]

The largest Asian diaspora in the world is the Indian diaspora. The overseas Indian community, estimated to number over 17.5 million, is spread across many regions of the world, on every continent. It is a global community which is diverse, heterogeneous and eclectic and its members represent different regions, languages, cultures, and faiths (see Desi).^[71] Similarly, the Romani, numbering roughly 12 million in Europe^[72] trace their origins to the Indian subcontinent, and their presence in Europe is first attested to in the Middle Ages.^{[73][74]} The South Asian diaspora as a whole has over 44 million people.^[75]

The earliest known Asian diaspora of note is the Jewish diaspora. With roots in the Babylonian Captivity and later migrations under Hellenism, the majority of the diaspora can be attributed to the Roman conquest, expulsion, and enslavement of the Jewish population of Judea,^[76] whose descendants became the Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Mizrahim of today,^{[77][78]} roughly numbering 15 million of which 8 million still live in the diaspora,^[79] though the number was much higher before Zionist immigration to what is now Israel and the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

Chinese emigration (also known as the Chinese Diaspora; see also Overseas Chinese)^[80] first occurred thousands of years ago. The mass emigration that occurred from the 19th century to 1949 was caused mainly by wars and starvation in mainland China, as well as political corruption. Most migrants were illiterate or poorly educated peasants, called by the now-recognized racial slur coolies (Chinese: 苦力, literally "hard labor"), who migrated to developing countries in need of labor, such as the Americas, Australia, South Africa, Southeast Asia, Malaya and other places.

Pakistani diaspora is the third in Asia with approximately 9 million Pakistanis living abroad mostly in middle east, North America and Europe.

At least three waves of Nepalese diaspora can be identified. The earliest wave dates back to hundreds of years as early marriage and high birthrates propelled Hindu settlement eastward across Nepal, then into Sikkim and Bhutan. A backlash developed in the 1980s as Bhutan's political elites realized that Bhutanese Buddhists were at risk of becoming a minority in their own country. At least 60,000 ethnic Nepalese from Bhutan have been resettled in the United States.^[81] A second wave was driven by British recruitment of mercenary soldiers beginning around 1815 and resettlement after retirement in the British Isles and Southeast Asia. The third wave began in the 1970s as land shortages intensified and the pool of educated labor greatly exceeded job openings in Nepal. Job-related emigration created Nepalese enclaves in India, the wealthier countries of the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Current estimates of the number of Nepalese living outside Nepal range well up into the millions.

In Siam, regional power struggles among several kingdoms in the region led to a large diaspora of ethnic Lao between the 1700s–1800s by Siamese rulers to settle large areas of the Siamese kingdom's northeast region, where Lao ethnicity is still a major factor in 2012. During this period, Siam decimated the Lao capital, capturing, torturing, and killing the Lao king Anuwongse, who led the Lao rebellion in the 19th century.

European diasporas

[edit]

Further information: European diaspora

European history contains numerous diaspora-causing events. In ancient times, the trading and colonising activities of the Greek tribes from the Balkans and Asia Minor spread people of Greek culture, religion and language around the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins, establishing Greek city-states in southern Italy (the so-called "Magna Graecia"), northern Libya, eastern Spain, the south of France, and the Black Sea coasts. Greeks

founded more than 400 colonies.^[82] Tyre and Carthage also colonised the Mediterranean.

Greek territories and colonies during the Archaic period (750–550 BC)

Alexander the Great's conquest of the Achaemenid Empire marked the beginning of the Hellenistic period, characterized by a new wave of Greek colonization in Asia and Africa, with Greek ruling classes established in Egypt, southwest Asia and northwest India.^[83] Subsequent waves of colonization and migration during the Middle Ages added to the older settlements or created new ones, thus replenishing the Greek diaspora and making it one of the most long-standing and widespread in the world. The Romans also established numerous colonies and settlements outside of Rome and throughout the Roman empire.

The Migration-Period relocations, which included several phases, are just one set of many in history. The first phase Migration-Period displacement (between 300 and 500 AD) included relocation of the Goths (Ostrogoths and Visigoths), Vandals, Franks, various other Germanic peoples (Burgundians, Lombards, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Suebi and Alemanni), Alans and numerous Slavic tribes. The second phase, between 500 and 900 AD, saw Slavic, Turkic, and other tribes on the move, resettling in Eastern Europe and gradually leaving it predominantly Slavic, and affecting Anatolia and the Caucasus as the first Turkic tribes (Avars, Huns, Khazars, Pechenegs), as well as Bulgars, and possibly Magyars arrived. The last phase of the migrations saw the coming of the Hungarian Magyars. The Viking expansion out of Scandinavia into southern and eastern Europe, Iceland, the British Isles and Greenland. The recent application of the word "diaspora" to the Viking lexicon highlights their cultural profile distinct from their predatory reputation in the regions they settled, especially in the North Atlantic.^[84] The more positive connotations associated with the social science term help to view the movement of the Scandinavian peoples in the Viking Age in a new way.^[85]

Such colonizing migrations cannot be considered indefinitely as diasporas; over very long periods, eventually, the migrants assimilate into the settled area so completely that it becomes their new mental homeland. Thus the modern Magyars of Hungary do not feel that they belong in the Western Siberia that the Hungarian Magyars left 12 centuries ago; and the English descendants of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes do not yearn to reoccupy the plains of Northwest Germany.

In 1492 a Spanish-financed expedition headed by Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas, after which European exploration and colonization rapidly expanded. Historian James Axtell estimates that 240,000 people left Europe for the Americas in the 16th century.^[86] Emigration continued. In the 19th century

alone over 50 million Europeans migrated to North and South America.^[87] Other Europeans moved to Siberia, Africa, and Australasia. The properly Spanish emigrants were mainly from several parts of Spain, but not only the impoverished ones (i.e., Basques in Chile), and the destination varied also along the time. As an example, the Galicians moved first to the American colonies during the XVII-XX (mainly but not only Mexico, Cuba, Argentina and Venezuela, as many writers during the Francoist exile), later to Europe (France, Switzerland) and finally within Spain (to Madrid, Catalonia or the Basque Country).

A specific 19th-century example is the Irish diaspora, beginning in the mid-19th century and brought about by *an Gorta Mór* or "the Great Hunger" of the Irish Famine. An estimated 45% to 85% of Ireland's population emigrated to areas including Britain, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand. The size of the Irish diaspora is demonstrated by the number of people around the world who claim Irish ancestry; some sources put the figure at 80 to 100 million.

From the 1860s, the Circassian people, originally from Europe, were dispersed through Anatolia, Australia, the Balkans, the Levant, North America, and West Europe, leaving less than 10% of their population in the homeland – parts of historical Circassia (in the modern-day Russian portion of the Caucasus).^[88]

Italian Argentines during the opening parade of the XXXIV Immigrant's Festival. About 60% of Argentina's population has Italian ancestry.^[89]

The Scottish Diaspora includes large populations of Highlanders moving to the United States and Canada after the Highland Clearances; as well as the Lowlanders, becoming the Ulster Scots in Ireland and the Scotch-Irish in America.

There were two major Italian diasporas in Italian history. The first diaspora began around 1880, two decades after the Unification of Italy, and ended in the 1920s to the early 1940s with the rise of Fascist Italy.^[90] Poverty was the main reason for emigration, specifically the lack of land as *mezzadria* sharecropping flourished in Italy, especially in the South, and property became subdivided over generations. Especially in Southern Italy, conditions were harsh.^[90] Until the 1860s to 1950s, most of Italy was a rural society with many small towns and cities and almost no modern industry in which land management practices, especially in the South and the Northeast, did not easily convince farmers to stay on the land and to work the soil.^[91] Another factor was related to the overpopulation of Southern Italy as a result of the improvements in socioeconomic conditions after Unification.^[92] That created a demographic boom and forced the new generations to emigrate en masse in the

late 19th century and the early 20th century, mostly to the Americas.^[93] The new migration of capital created millions of unskilled jobs around the world and was responsible for the simultaneous mass migration of Italians searching for "work and bread".^[94] The second diaspora started after the end of World War II and concluded roughly in the 1970s. Between 1880 and 1980, about 15,000,000 Italians left the country permanently.^[95] By 1980, it was estimated that about 25,000,000 Italians were residing outside Italy.^[96]

Technology and media in diaspora cultures

27. The roles of new technologies and media have developed and increased in recent years. As the development of such new technologies continues across the globe, new technologies continue to make their impact upon diaspora cultures and their ties with countries of settlement and countries of origin. New avenues of technology and media can be of great benefit to diaspora networks and should be further explored by all member states.

28. The development of new technology and sciences, and the subsequent domination by the Western world of this domain, has also provoked a development of the phenomenon of *brain drain* in recent years. Such a movement of assets and human resources, broadly speaking towards the Western world, has contributed to the dynamic of "scientific" diaspora communities across the globe. As more and more 'scientific' diaspora communities appear, their unique cultures and societies have a sustained impact upon the countries of settlement and origin.

29. Technology has developed involved interactions of communities within diaspora networks. Such a multiplication of relations between different components of a diaspora network, and between different diaspora communities themselves, has provoked a more extensive multi-polar structure of diaspora networks. This subsequently consolidates diaspora cultures through increased and more diverse interaction; interaction that can promote the original identity and culture of a diaspora, and can influence and alter the political, cultural and social agenda of a member state. However, such multi-polarity can also produce destabilising effects as it becomes increasingly difficult to localise and to identify diasporas and local communities within the broad outlook of a diaspora network.

30. Technology as one of the cornerstones to the dynamic of globalisation currently sweeping the world has enabled the internationalisation of goods and assets, persons, ideas and cultures. The increased capacity of diaspora communities to communicate and interact between themselves at all levels, transfer funds, transport goods and raw materials, and transmit ideas between the various components of a diaspora network is considered to be a broadly positive

step in the consolidation of diaspora cultures and their relationships with modern society. Various examples, such as the increase in affordable travel, notably international air and rail travel, and the subsequent development of “return tourism” – whereby members of diasporas return to their perceived countries of origin for short visits, in the cases of Greece, Croatia, Armenian and Ireland for example – demonstrate the endless possibilities that technology presents for such continued development.

31. The development of computers has specifically enabled the greater interaction of diasporans, between themselves and between their communities and the prevailing societies of the country of origin and the country of settlement. The installation of “national languages” on computer hardware facilitates correspondence and communication. The development of the Internet facilitates instant communication between individuals, families and communities, and promotes the sentiments and the needs of diaspora cultures. However, it is surprising to note that many resources for, and created by, diaspora networks have not at present been developed to their full potential.

32. The development of various forms of media within diaspora networks also harnesses many benefits for all concerned and should be examined and exploited to the highest possible degree. Media serves as a method of diaspora publicity, a catalyst for group solidarity, and a potential mould for diaspora political and cultural agenda within the society of which it plays a part. The continued transnationalisation of media in recent years, with the establishment of satellite and cable television, the Internet, and the wider distribution of written media, has provoked an escalation of social and cultural awareness of diaspora cultures. New media enables continued advances in diaspora studies and education. New media also enables the fostering and the establishment of new links between communities. Moreover, new media is one of the many factors that can encourage the initial mobilisation of once dormant diaspora cultures.

33. Many member states make substantial provision for diaspora culture in terms of access to media and technological resources, both in their roles as country of origin and as country of settlement. For example, Hungarian authorities grant generous access to various forms of media and technology to its diaspora cultures. Portuguese authorities have continued to develop a wider access of technological and media resources for its diaspora abroad, in order to successfully promote increased interaction between diasporans and their “home” land. However, some member states are reticent to sanction continued growth of new media and technologies for diaspora use, citing political and social concerns, financial restrictions and broadcasting and copyright constraints. For example, the registration of British digital television must be to an address in the United

Kingdom, in principle ruling out the possibility of transmission of broadcasts from British digital networks to British diaspora communities abroad.

34. However, potential benefits can be potentially masked by potential weaknesses and disadvantages. The transnationalisation of media and technology potentially causes the development of increasing ties, links and mobilisations, which, if handled unsuccessfully, can cause an over-complication of diaspora interactions, and provoke subsequent tensions and confusion. Ultimately, the excessive interaction between diaspora cultures and their countries of origin and settlement, and the disproportionate use of new technologies and media could effectively threaten the individual and traditional communities that originally developed. An example of resistance to such trends of globalisation and over-complication of interaction is the kinship-orientated Albanian diaspora, which maintain a closed sphere of interaction – a voluntary ghetto - among itself, in order to preserve its traditional diaspora culture from cultural and political infiltration from more dominant forces.