



The Impact of Globalization on Unprotected Languages: A Linguistic Anthropology

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DESCRIPTION

Linguistic anthropology, a subfield of anthropology, focuses on understanding how language frame the culture, thought, and society. In this context, linguistic anthropologists study how language evolves, reflects social hierarchies, and functions in various human interactions. The spread of global languages such as English, Spanish, and Mandarin is contributing to the disappearance of linguistic diversity at a unique rate.

The power of global languages: One of the primary contributors to language extinction is the rise of a few dominant global languages. English, for instance, has become the world's common language, particularly in business, education, technology, and media. Similarly, languages like Mandarin and Spanish are gaining importance due to the global influence of China and Latin America. As speakers of smaller languages see the socio-economic advantages of learning these dominant languages, there is a tendency to abandon their native languages, especially among younger generations.

Migration and urbanization: Globalization has also influences large-scale of migration and urbanization, often resulting in linguistic absorption. When speakers of unprotected languages migrate to urban centres or other countries, they are often pressured to adopt the dominant language to integrate into the new society. Over time, this shift leads to a decline in the use of their native language. In urban areas, linguistic minorities are often small, scattered, and under-represented, further marginalizing their languages.

Additionally, modern urban living creates environments where traditional language practices, such as oral narration and communal gatherings, are less common. The lack of supportive contexts for language use can lead to its gradual disappearance.

Technological influence and media saturation: The internet, television, and social media have also played a role in homogenizing language use. While these platforms provide new means of communication, they often promote dominant languages. The content available online is more than English, followed by a few other global languages, making it difficult for speakers of unprotected languages to maintain a strong online presence in their native tongues.

The language documentation projects: One of the main topics in preserving unprotected languages is documentation. This involves recording the phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of a language, often through audio and video recordings of native speakers. Such projects help create a record of the language that can be used for future revitalization efforts.

Language regeneration in education: Education plays a crucial role in language preservation. Several countries and indigenous groups have introduced bilingual education programs that teach both the dominant national language and the local unprotected language. This is not only ensuring that younger generations become fluent in their native tongue but also elevates the status of the language within the community.

Digital tools and media for language preservation: The digital age, while contributing to language loss, also provides opportunities for revitalization. Social media platforms, blogs, podcasts, and YouTube channels can serve as spaces for speakers of unprotected languages to connect, share, and promote their language. For example, Duolingo now offers courses in several unprotected languages, including Hawaiian, Navajo, and Scottish Gaelic, providing millions of learners with the opportunity to engage with these languages.

CONCLUSION

The endangerment of languages due to globalization is one of the most pressing issues within linguistic anthropology today. As dominant global languages continue to expand, the survival of thousands of minority languages hangs in the balance. However, there are reasons for optimism. Through a combination of documentation, education, and digital tools, many communities are fighting to preserve their linguistic heritage. The work of linguistic anthropologists in this field is invaluable, providing the knowledge and support needed to sustain linguistic diversity in an increasingly interconnected world. Language is more than a tool for communication; it is a vessel of culture, identity, and wisdom. The preservation of unprotected languages is not merely about maintaining diversity for its own sake but about protecting the cultural and intellectual wealth of humanity. As we move further into the 21st century, the challenge of balancing globalization with linguistic preservation will remain an important task for anthropologists, communities, and policymakers.

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