

COMMUNICATION ROLES OF LANGUAGES IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES

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Communication Roles of Languages in Multilingual Societies is published in TBT because it offers translators some valuable insights in the understanding of the different functions which different languages perform within societies. Bible translators are increasingly asking themselves if the languages they work in might not be giving way to the pressures of some more widely used languages. Nida and Wonderly provide us with ways of assessing the various jobs competing languages are called on to perform. A careful study of this article should enable a translator to evaluate the faces of multilingualism more accurately and to assess the nature of a changing linguistic scene.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a model for studying languages in reference to their communicative functions, especially in multilingual societies; and to point out some of the factors that should be taken into consideration by educators and policy-making bodies who are concerned with the development of national languages and with making optimal use of other languages in their areas.

The role of language in society has often been studied and described. As a result, there are a number of classifications of language usage, but these are based primarily (1) on the function of language within different contexts, e.g. education, legal proceedings, governmental decrees, trade, religion, etc.; or (2) on different levels of status, e.g. official, national, tribal; or (3) levels of usage, e.g. colloquial, literary, vulgar, slang; or (4) on differences of historical setting, e.g. ancient, traditional, archaic, obsolescent, and modern.¹

¹ See especially William A. Stewart, "An Outline of Linguistic Typology for Describing Multilingualism", in Frank A. Rice (ed.), *Study of the Role of Second Languages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*, pp. 15-25 (Washington, D.C., Center for Applied Linguistics, 1962). (This volume contains several important articles and bibliographies related to the subject of the present paper.) Another volume of importance, both for the articles it contains and for its bibliographies, is John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (eds.), *The Ethnography of Communication* (Part 2 of *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 66, No. 6, 1964).

These classifications have never been fully satisfactory, since one and the same language may function in so many different ways and diverse groups within the society may make use of languages for quite different purposes. Though such classifications are obviously helpful, they generally fail to highlight the dynamics of language usage and as a result they prevent us from seeing similarities of function on a broad cross-cultural base.

In contrast with these valuable but somewhat limited classifications of language use, this article shifts the perspective from the particular language itself to the communication needs of the society, with primary emphasis on the typical multilingual or multidialectal society. Our purpose is thus to study the relationships between language (or languages) and the communication needs of a particular group of interacting persons.

2. Major Communication Functions of Language

A study of language in terms of the needs for adequate communication within a particular society has led to the recognition of three major communication roles: (1) communication with people of the in-group, (2) communication with people of the out-group, and (3) communication involving specialized information. Quite naturally, within multilingual societies there is a tendency for certain languages to be primarily "in-group languages" while others function as "out-group languages"; and finally, certain languages may have the function of "languages of specialized information".

3. The In-group Language

The in-group language is the one used in any society for the basic face-to-face relationships with other speakers with whom the individual in question fully identifies. In so-called primitive societies this would quite naturally be the indigenous or tribal language. In certain large language communities such a face-to-face language might be the regional dialect as, for example, in the case of Swiss-German.

In a large linguistic community which is relatively heterogeneous, in the sense that it has many so-called "vertical dialects" (socio-economic distinctions in speech), the in-group form of language may be one of these levels; or it may be characterized by the use of colloquial levels involving special slang expressions, or it may even be a highly specialized jargon which is particularly important for in-group identification. Such forms of speech have been important for groups such as beatniks, and the in-group speech of English-speaking teen-agers reveals certain of these characteristics. Relatively elaborate underworld jargons have been known and studied by various language specialists.²

4. The Out-group Language

Almost all people living in a face-to-face speech community have some need for contacting people of groups outside their own community. The only exception to this situation might be some of the isolated tribes in Amazonia, but even among groups such as the Guaica (or Shiriana) Indians in northern

² For a discussion of some of the varieties which can be found within a large linguistic community, see William L. Wonderly, *Bible Translations for Popular Use*, chapters 2 and 3 (London, United Bible Societies, 1968).

Brazil and southern Venezuela (where some of the dialects are mutually unintelligible), there is a highly developed form of language used on all occasions when different tribal groups meet together. Even under these so-called "primitive" circumstances an out-group form of language has developed.

In many parts of the world a trade language serves the purpose of out-group communication. In the lower Congo and the Kwilu valley a trade language called Kituba serves for most intertribal contacts. The Kituba language is actually a koiné form of Kikongo, which has spread throughout the area as a medium of out-group communication. In the process of spreading, it has become greatly simplified in its linguistic structures. In eastern New Guinea the language of out-group communication is a local pidgin language called Neomelanesian, a name designed to give the language some status.³

It is important to recognize, however, that there are certain very essential differences between a pidgin language and a koiné language. The former tends to have its vocabulary and grammar derived from a foreign source, but to be very heavily influenced by the structures of the local languages. This is true, for example, of Weskos pidgin of West Africa, of Neomelanesian in New Guinea, and of Takitaki in the northern part of South America. As long as such a form of language is only a second language for people and used under relatively restricted circumstances, it may continue to have a rather restricted vocabulary and limited grammatical structures; as, for example, in the case of Chinook, used as a type of pidgin in the northwestern part of the United States. However, just as soon as such a pidgin becomes the only language of a sizeable constituency of interacting persons, for example, a hundred thousand or more, it develops very rapidly and becomes known as a creole language.

A koiné language, on the other hand, is a form of language which preserves in very large measure the basic vocabulary and structure of its source, but is considerably simplified as it spreads over "foreign" territory. It quite naturally tends to pick up vocabulary from local languages in the area, and it may also acquire certain of their grammatical devices. The general simplification of classical Greek as it spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean in post-classical times is the typical example of a koiné. Similarly, the spread of Swahili from Zanzibar and the contiguous coast of East Africa through a number of areas of East Africa represents the same kind of simplification process. Likewise, the manner in which Tagalog is now being promoted in the Philippines as a national language under the name of Pilipino is a similar example of this tendency toward simplification, with the retention of the basic vocabulary and structure of a single language.

5. The Language of Specialized Information

In many areas where there are both in-group and out-group languages, there is also the need for a language of specialized information. This is often

³ For a study of the characteristics of pidgin and creole languages, see Robert A. Hall, Jr., *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1966). For a listing and discussion of African pidgins and trade languages, see William J. Samarin, "Lingua Francas, with Special Reference to Africa", in Rice, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-64.

the language of higher education or of specialized formal training. For example, in the Camerouns many of the speakers of local languages, e.g. Bafia, Bassa, Meka, and Kaka, also know the trade language Yaoundé (closely related to Bulu which was promoted as a trade language by Protestant missionaries). Yaoundé serves as an important out-group language, but any person wanting to acquire specialized information, that is, information which comes from the world culture and not from the culture of the immediate out-groups, must learn French. Similarly, in the Philippines speakers of such languages as Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Pampango, and Samareño must learn Pilipino if they are to enjoy movies, watch television, read certain newspapers, and carry on trade in areas outside of their immediate tribal areas. But these persons must also learn English if they want to go on to secondary school or the university and if they wish to take positions of leadership in politics, business, or social life.

6. Multilingual and Monolingual Linguistic Structures

Though in the preceding description of in-group languages, out-group languages, and languages of specialized information we may have given the impression that such uses of language occur only in strictly multilingual situations, it must be clearly recognized that these three basic functions of language exist in a number of different linguistic settings. The setting in which these functions are most obvious is no doubt the "three-language structure"; but it would be misleading if we were not to recognize also certain essential features of a two-language structure as well as those of a one-language structure. What we are dealing with here is not primarily multilingual patterns but the essential functions of language. Hence, even to appreciate such functioning in a multilingual structure, it is important that certain essential comparisons be made with other structures.

7. The Three-Language Structure

A typical three-language structure may be found in Kenya where people who speak various in-group languages, e.g. Lugaroli, Kipsigis, Lango, Acholi, Kikamba, and Kikuyu, find it highly desirable to learn Swahili if they wish to have much outside contact. At the same time, if such persons want to obtain a higher education or to participate as leaders in national life, English is indispensable.

In a typical three-language structure a so-called "world language", e.g. English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese, tends to be the language of specialized information. This is due to the fact that technical information from the world culture comes to people primarily by means of such a language. However, a three-language structure does not always involve a so-called world language as the language of specialized information, for the linguistic world of a particular speech community may be highly restricted. For example, in the Kwilu area of Congo a Kihungana speaker certainly must learn Kituba if he is to have contacts with other tribal groups. Kituba thus becomes his out-group language. However, the language of the army and of many local Congolese government administrators is Lingala. Within his restricted

context, therefore, Lingala may be said to constitute the language of specialized information for him.

A similar situation exists in the northern part of the Philippines. Some of the small tribal groups learn Ilocano as the out-group language, but if they are to have much contact with the national life, then it is essential for them also to learn Pilipino, which thus becomes for them the language of specialized information.

There are, of course, some speakers who might be said to have a "four-language structure". Their own tribal language constitutes the in-group language, and there may be two different out-group languages, representing different "grades" of usefulness and serving to communicate with different out-groups. Finally, they may have a fourth language for specialized information. However, this kind of four-language structure is relatively rare and does not usually involve any large number of individuals. Furthermore, the possession of more than one out-group language usually represents not so much a different functional level as the presence of diverse out-groups with whom the person has occasion to interact. It is thus only the exceptional situation in which a person is so placed as to find it important to know four languages representing four distinct levels of communication. Therefore, we have not set up a four-language structure as being one of the basic structures for communication.

Focusing upon a three-language structure for different levels of linguistic usage does not mean, of course, that people necessarily restrict themselves to learning three languages. Quite the contrary, in Africa where there is a greater percentage of multilingualism than in any other large speech area of the world, many persons know four, five, or six languages. However, these do not represent distinct grades in out-group language contacts, but rather the learning of specific neighboring languages under circumstances where their acquisition has proven obligatory, inevitable, or highly useful. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the learning of a specific out-group language which serves as a basis of contact with one particular group, and the learning of an out-group language which may serve as a means of communication with a number of different groups. It is within the context of this type of distinction that the recognition of a three-language structure seems to be fully justified.

8. The Two-Language Structure

In many places in the world, speakers participate in a two-language structure rather than in a three-language structure. The second language serves both as the language of out-group contacts and also as the source of specialized information. For the indigenous groups of Latin America, for example, the various Indian languages constitute the in-group forms of speech. The out-group languages, both for communication between Indian groups and with the leadership in the national life, are primarily Spanish and Portuguese. These languages at the same time serve as the languages of specialized information, including all levels of higher education.

In Haiti there is a special form of two-language structure. Practically all persons speak Haitian Creole, but only about 10 percent speak what would

be called standard French; though quite naturally a much higher percentage understand at least the simpler forms of such standard French. Haitian Creole, which is essentially a form of French with a number of rather radical structural changes, serves as the in-group language; but if one is to identify with the cultural heritage of Haiti (which is proudly French) and with higher echelons in the government, or is to have the advantages of higher education, then standard French is indispensable.

In some "two-language systems" the out-group language and the language of specialized information may actually be multiple. In Holland, for example, there are three languages which serve simultaneously as languages of the out-groups and of specialized information. These are German, French, and English. A good secretary must be able to take dictation and to transcribe in all three languages. At the same time, however, Dutch, which is the in-group language, serves as the language of university education and hence must also be regarded as a vehicle for specialized information. Nevertheless, it cannot possibly serve all of the requirements of a highly technological society which must depend upon the world's most recent resources of technical information. Moreover, the economic condition of Holland requires constant contacts beyond those which can be maintained through Dutch, in terms both of out-group contacts and of specialized information.

The Dutch language may thus be regarded as a kind of anomalous development. On the one hand, it approximates a "one-language structure" since at least in certain regards the same language serves for all three basic purposes. It is, for example, the in-group language of Dutch people generally; it becomes the out-group language for the linguistically proud Frisians, and for many Dutch people it also serves as the language of specialized information, since it can be used throughout a university course. Nevertheless, the size of the Dutch-speaking community, the necessity for commercial contacts, and the requirements of technological information superimpose upon this one-language system a two-language structure in which the upper levels may actually be served by several different languages, primarily, English, German, and French.

Switzerland might be cited by some persons as an exception to the rule of having only a single language as the in-group language, for this country has been traditionally regarded as basically multilingual. This is not quite the case, however, for each person identifies strongly with his own linguistic group, whether French, German, Italian, Romansch, or Ladin. Nevertheless, there is also the need for an outside language, usually French or German. In the German-speaking portion of Switzerland, local Swiss dialects serve as the in-group language while standard High German serves as the language for out-group contacts and as the language of specialized information.

9. The One-Language Structure

Native speakers of major languages, e.g. English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, or Chinese, have typically a one-language structure. They may actually speak a local regional dialect, for example, southern U.S. or Liverpool English, as the language of in-group identification; but the standard

form of the language is used for most out-group contacts and for specialized information. Since there are so many millions of speakers of these individual languages and since there is such a wealth of information contained in books in such languages, most people feel little or no compulsion to learn a foreign language.

Within such one-language structures there are always those who specialize in out-group contacts. The persons dealing with tourists and foreign representatives are language specialists, but this does not have any great effect upon the broad segment of the population.

Of course there are, within many of the larger one-language societies, minority ethnic groups that have originated through immigration and maintain a two-language structure, in which the language of their country of origin constitutes the in-group language. Examples are Spanish, German, Polish, etc., in the U.S.A., and Italian, Japanese, German, etc., in Brazil. These languages tend to disappear within a few generations, but the rate of disappearance depends upon many factors. If the ethnic group has social prestige in the country and speaks a language which also enjoys prestige (as in the case of English or German-speaking immigrants in Latin America), their language may be maintained almost indefinitely; but if the prestige factor is lacking due to poor social and economic conditions of the ethnic group (as in the case of Spanish or Polish-speaking groups in the U.S.A.), the language suffers a "social handicap" and is apt to be rejected by the newer generations in their desire to extend their in-group beyond the borders of their own ethnic group.

In one-language structures, the theoretical need for additional languages of specialized information has been recognized, but in many instances the recognition is far more theoretical than practical. For example, German and French have traditionally been regarded as essential for a candidate for the Ph.D. degree, but there is an increasing tendency to make requirements in these two languages only nominal and not to insist upon a level of competence which would actually be required if one is to do any research in the languages in question. Nevertheless, the very fact that such requirements do remain in most universities is at least a "nod" in the direction of languages of specialized information.

In those languages in which there are less adequate resources of specialized information, there is almost always a greater tendency for persons to acquire a more adequate grasp of some foreign language. For example, university students in Latin America find it almost necessary to learn a language such as English, especially if they are specializing in sciences.

Japan is a country in which an amazing effort has been made to provide a one-language structure. Japanese publishing houses undertake an almost incredible amount of translating. This means that Japanese is probably the only language outside of Europe where a national language has succeeded in becoming an adequate vehicle for specialized information. This, of course, has been possible only because of a sound economic base, a high degree of literacy, and large numbers of avid readers interested in specialized information. There are very few other countries in the world with resources such as to make possible the duplication of this effort.

10. Languages and Political Action

The above description of three-language and two-language structures has not indicated anything of the tensions or problems involved in such multi-level systems; but obviously the importance of language for interpersonal relationships and its symbolic value as a means of group identification (it is the most important because for one thing it is the hardest to change or falsify) make languages politically and socially very strategic. Hence, languages naturally become a prime element in the struggle for national unity. From the very beginning of the independence movement in Indonesia the trade language Bahasa Indonesia was proclaimed as the language of national unity. This was a fortunate choice, for though at the time that it was adopted as a language of national unity it probably did not have more than ten million speakers, it nevertheless was a very effective instrument for rallying the total constituency of Indonesia. Even today there are only about thirty million speakers of Bahasa Indonesia, of whom perhaps not more than three to four million speak it as their mother tongue. In view of the presence of Javanese, which is spoken by some sixty million people, it is in a sense surprising that Bahasa Indonesia was chosen as the language of unity. But if Javanese had been chosen, the attainment of national unity would have been highly questionable.

Bahasa Indonesia did have certain very distinct advantages as a national language. In the first place, its speakers were widely scattered throughout the whole region of Indonesia. In the second place, its structure is relatively simple and is closely related to all of the languages within the Indonesian area except those very few which are spoken in the highlands of West Irian. The very fact that Bahasa Indonesia was politically neutral did a great deal to make it acceptable to various groups who would have been unwilling to accept any other language as a dominant form of speech.

Bahasa Indonesia itself is derived from the Malay language as spoken in the northern part of Sumatra and the Malay peninsula. As it has spread throughout Indonesia, it has adopted certain typically simplified structures which mean that it may be classified as a type of koiné.

In the Philippines the linguistic situation was somewhat different. The obvious choice for a language of national unity, in terms of the number of speakers, would have been Cebuano since it is spoken by more persons than any other. However, Tagalog, as the language of the region of Manila, had much greater prestige and had been acquired by a number of speakers of other languages as their "second language". The influence of Tagalog as the language of Manila was, however, increasingly decisive, for the population of Manila is somewhat over three million persons out of a total population on the islands of thirty million. In other words, at least one-tenth of the total population of the country lives in Manila, and a very high percentage of persons go to Manila from time to time.

If, however, Tagalog was to be accepted by people generally throughout the Philippines, certain concessions were regarded as essential. As one concession the national language has been called Pilipino, not Tagalog. This means that promoters of the use of Pilipino have rejected the pressures which have come from the strict Tagalog purists, who wanted to establish Tagalog

in its classical form as being the norm of the national language. Some persons, of course, promoted the use of English as a national language since it was spoken at least in some measure by as many persons as any other one language of the Philippines. Nevertheless, English had a very decided disadvantage as an out-group language and as the language of national unity, since its structure is so completely different from that of the Malayo-Polynesian languages of the Philippines. Actually, a person who speaks any one of the Philippine languages can usually learn Pilipino within three to four months of residence in a Tagalog-speaking area. Moreover, the learning of Pilipino in school is much greater than would ever be the case with English. Even though English has been retained as the language of advanced primary and secondary education and of university instruction, there is mounting pressure for the use of Pilipino as the medium of instruction throughout the secondary schools, except for courses in science, where it is recognized that students obviously need to be prepared to receive specialized information in a language in which a greater abundance of such information is available.

In contrast with the situations in Indonesia and the Philippines, India has presented quite a different perspective as to language usage. English has become a kind of *de facto* national language by virtue of the extensive British school system during colonial times. English was particularly acceptable to Dravidian-speaking groups in the south who seemed to feel that in language matters they fared somewhat better under British rule since the interests of language groups such as the Tamils, Telugus, and Malayalams were "protected" from domination by persons speaking the Sanskritic-based languages of the north. On the other hand, making English an actual national language would be an enormous economic task for India, and hence political leaders inevitably turned to Hindi, a kind of linguistically neutral amalgam, and essentially a trade language of central India. However, enforcing Hindi as a national language has been an entirely too explosive issue. For one thing, it meant that northerners would tend to have distinct advantages in examinations for government positions, and the whole movement would thus prove prejudicial to the interests of the Dravidian-speaking groups of the southern part of India. The reaction of people to the language issue became so violent that bloody riots resulted. Under such circumstances it has been impossible for India to develop a unified language policy, particularly in the face of an increasing tendency toward regionalism, not only in government but also in educational policy. For example, in a number of states the language of university education is shifting from English to such regional languages as Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.⁴

11. Nationalism and Regionalism

The very pressures that create the needs for some national language as a unifying force almost inevitably also create a contrary reaction in favor of regional languages. Whether people actually feel threatened by the emphasis

⁴ For various other aspects of the linguistic situation in India, see Charles A. Ferguson and John J. Gumperz (eds.), *Linguistic Diversity in South Asia*, Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Pub. 13 (1960).

upon national unity in language is hard to say, but certainly the emphasis upon a single language very frequently makes them more and more aware of their own regional language. As already noted in the case of India, regional languages have been winning out in certain situations. Also, more and more languages of Sanskritic stock have been recognized as official and therefore authorized for education. The political realities of such a situation almost force politicians to accept regional languages as vehicles of education and even as potential instruments for specialized information. However, here is where the real problem arises, since the regional language communities rarely have the economic resources sufficient to publish current specialized information in such languages. Almost by the time a book is translated and published it is out of date if it deals with some of the rapidly developing technological phases of modern society. In a world in which the information explosion is even more significant than the population explosion, emphasis upon regional languages produces serious economic and social hindrances.

This local emphasis on regional languages depends partly upon the degree of cultural vitality of the particular regional group, and upon the group's sense of identification or non-identification with the national society. In Latin America most of the indigenous groups have, through more than three centuries of uninterrupted Spanish and Portuguese-speaking colonization and government, developed a feeling of inferiority with respect to their own Indian languages; while maintaining the Indian languages for purposes of in-group communication and identification, they have shown little interest in extending their use to that of out-group communication or the communication of specialized information. And as these groups progressively identify with the national society, they show increasing interest in the use of the national language, Spanish or Portuguese. The resurgence of Guaraní in Paraguay is only an apparent exception, as this language has now taken on national status alongside Spanish, and has become a symbol of national, not just regional, identity.

In the Camerouns the emphasis in education has certainly been on French, and though there is no tendency to repudiate French as the national language nor as the language of specialized information, there has certainly been an emphasis upon regional languages, particularly within the Christian community. Here there has been a rapidly increased interest in the translation of the Scriptures into various languages. On the whole, however, this emphasis is not at the expense of the national language, but at the expense of some former out-group languages. For example, Protestants in the Camerouns are no longer content to have their Scriptures in Bulu, which had become a kind of "Protestant Latin" to many of the people. They insist that they want the Scriptures in French and their own local language, but not in a kind of "half-way language" such as Bulu has seemed to be.

12. A National Language

For a language to become a national language certain very important features are needed. In the first place, it should be politically neutral. If it is not characterized by political neutrality, it is too often regarded merely as a tool by which a particular language group seeks to extend its domination.

Quite naturally, this is a cause for alarm among other language communities. In this respect, the development of Bahasa Indonesia has been very instructive, for under the circumstances there has been very little opposition to Bahasa Indonesia and almost no reaction in favor of regional languages. In the Philippines, making Tagalog appear politically neutral has been exceptionally wise; and in East Africa Swahili has at least seemed to afford a neutral linguistic medium, especially in a nation such as Kenya where the political center of the country is not associated with traditional Swahili dominance.

In Nigeria there is simply no politically neutral language. In fact, the division into three major regions reflects the three language poles: Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo. The political survival of Nigeria as a country would be even more seriously threatened than it is if any one of these languages were promoted by the government as being the one national language.

If a language is to be a national language, it should also be linguistically related to the various local languages of the area. One feature which makes Tagalog and Bahasa Indonesia so acceptable in their respective areas is that they are so closely related to all of the other languages. For example, a generative grammar of Tagalog, Ilocano, and Cebuano can be almost completely identical up to the point where morphemes have to be identified. In other words, the grammatical structure is essentially the same. It is only that individual lexical items tend to be different. With languages so very closely related, people can learn the national language in a very short time. It is so much easier than having to master an entirely foreign structure. In contrast, the fact that Spanish and Portuguese, as Indo-European languages, are so radically different from the Indian languages of Latin America, is no doubt one of the important factors which has hindered the indigenous groups from learning the national language in these countries. Moreover, when persons are required to learn a completely foreign grammatical structure they often tend to develop a relatively distorted form of that structure as, for example, in the rather widespread modifications of French structure as now spoken in Congo.

For a national language to succeed it should also be spoken as a mother tongue by a substantial community of speakers who can serve as fully satisfactory models. In Indonesia an average of one person in ten could speak the language Bahasa Indonesia—with, of course, certain minor local variations, but always with complete mutual comprehension. The persons who serve as models for such a language should also be well distributed geographically and not concentrated in one place. The problem of French in the Congo is that after independence the number of people who spoke French as their mother tongue became increasingly more restricted (even a high percentage of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the Congo were Flemish-speaking). The increasing absence of valid models creates a serious problem, for with rapid expansion of the school system and fewer and fewer native speakers as models for the language, students often become separated by a four-to-five "generational gap" between the native speaker of French and the local teacher of French. As a result, a native French speaker often has real difficulty in recognizing his own language as spoken by such people. Almost the same thing is true of English as it is often taught in local schools

in the Philippines. Accordingly, many persons speak of this form of English as "bamboo English".

13. The National Language and the Language of Specialized Information

Almost inevitably, leaders of any nation attempt to make the national language also the language of specialized information. This is precisely what has happened in the case of Indonesia. At an earlier stage Dutch was the language of the university system in the area, but shortly after independence all instruction was carried out in Bahasa Indonesia. The rejection of Dutch is understandable, not only because of its association with colonialism and the fact that its structure differs from that of Malayo-Polynesian, but also because it has certain limitations as far as being a "world language" is concerned. Dutch thus seemed to be an inadequate instrument for keeping abreast of technological developments throughout the world. English was considered as a language of specialized information, but only for certain restricted types of material. As a result, Bahasa Indonesia was not only established as a national language, but every effort has been made to raise it to the status of a language of specialized information. For the most part, however, language planners in Indonesia have had no adequate appreciation of the technical and economic problems involved. No provision, for example, has been made for the translating and publishing of necessary textbooks. There has even been drastic restriction on the importation of books, and as a result the level of training in the universities has suffered.

In making the national language a language of specialized information, Japan has often been regarded as the model of what an Asian nation could do on its own. However, most Asians do not realize that when Japan finally did become open to Western technology, it already had a 38 percent literacy rate, a highly disciplined society, an intense emphasis upon education, and a viable economy which was able to support a broad program of translation and publication of foreign titles—something which has not been true of any other country outside the Western world.

The very problem of specialized information is becoming more and more acute, for nothing in the history of the world has quite equalled the information explosion during the last thirty years. It is estimated, for example, that of all the scientists who have ever engaged in research and publication, at least 90 percent are now alive and producing. Moreover, progress in the present-day world depends far more upon technological information than upon any other one factor. Therefore, if so-called developing nations do not wish to condemn themselves to perpetual dependency and to an ever-increasing lag, they must make provision for either (1) a sufficient number of persons fully educated in a language of specialized information and continually provided with books in such languages, or (2) adequate programs of translation and publication of such materials in the national language, or (3) even better, a combination of these two approaches. Perhaps the basic difficulty is that governmental bureaus move with tragic slowness in such matters, and by the time books are approved, translated, and published they are very likely out of date. So rapid is the advance of knowledge in our day.

14. Means for Promoting a National Language

The most obvious means for the promotion of a national language would certainly appear to be the school system, and this is no doubt largely true. However, it is absolutely essential that in any such school program a sufficient number of years of instruction be included so that a person actually develops adequate control of the language. Furthermore, he needs to have continued contacts with a national language or he soon loses facility. Where there are only three or four years of primary education in a national language, the tendency is to lapse into illiteracy or semi-literacy, and the continued influence of instruction in the national language becomes minimal. Such persons may know the alphabet and be able to write their name and read signs, but they are not really participants in the national language community. The failure of continued contacts through papers, magazines, and inexpensive books also means that much of the value of primary education may be lost, for there is no continuing reading habit. In this respect, goals defined or carried out by government bureaus are often entirely too shortsighted.

Without at least certain supplementary means of promoting the national language, even a school system is likely to be largely ineffective. In reality, the informal means by which people learn languages are often far more satisfactory than the formal ones. In the Philippines and Indonesia, for example, movies constitute one of the very important techniques by which the national language is promoted in the provinces. In the Philippines, comic books are particularly important. There are at least one hundred and twenty different publications put out every two weeks, ranging in size of edition from four thousand to thirty-four thousand each. The contents include everything from Donald Duck stories to horror comics, but the important factor is that all of these are in Pilipino and they reach a very wide audience. In fact, these books are no doubt more important in spreading the use of Pilipino than any and all of the textbooks printed by the government.

An important means of promoting the national language, but one which has not yet been sufficiently exploited, is that of serious literature on a level of language within reach of the poorly educated reader. Most serious reading matter tends to be on a level suitable only for the person who is well-educated in the national language, leaving a gap between the primer stage and the stage of the experienced reader. Many persons who learn to read, therefore, lapse into semi-literacy or, at best, continue to nourish their intellect on comics and similar publications. However, techniques are available by which writers can be taught to prepare serious materials on a "common" level which will be accessible to the poorly educated reader while still acceptable to the better educated—i.e. in a form of the language common to both groups.⁵ Bible translations in such common or popular language are being made available in Spanish, French, English, and a number of other languages, and the same techniques used in preparing these could also be used for preparing all kinds of material of cultural and educational value.

Increasingly in the Philippines television is an important instrument for the spread of Pilipino. Local radio is often in regional languages, but it is

⁵ Some of the techniques for preparing this type of literature, and of the problems relating to its preparation, are discussed in Wonderly, *op. cit.*

economically impossible to provide television in the various local languages and therefore the use of Pilipino serves an important function with an ever-increasing audience. The situation is no doubt similar in the case of other national languages; however, the persons who do not speak the national language frequently tend to be economically underprivileged and thus their limited access to television places certain limitations upon the use of this medium for spreading the language.

15. Gaps in Vocabulary of Out-group Languages and of Languages of Specialized Information

It is a common assumption that a person educated in an out-group language or in a language of specialized information will have a vocabulary fully sufficient to cover the totality of his experience, for example, greetings, business, politics, family life, religion, and technology. This, however, is by no means always the case. A person may have received a relatively adequate technological education in such a language but still have little or no experience with that language in certain areas of his life, such as interpersonal relations and religion. It is, of course, possible for such individuals to have a "consumer vocabulary" in such areas but to be pitifully inadequate as far as their "producer vocabulary" is concerned.⁶

In the Philippines the national language Pilipino serves quite well as an out-group language for speakers of many other languages except in the areas of family and religion, where almost inevitably people revert to the local language if this is at all possible. One must recognize, however, that with the emphasis upon the national language rather rapid progress in vocabulary acquisition is being made by many individuals. This is especially true in the case of families in which the father speaks one local language and the mother another, for in such cases the tendency is to change either to the national language Pilipino or, depending on the level of education, to English, since both Pilipino and English are regarded as being distinctly advantageous to the children.

There are some situations, however, in which religion seems to be primarily a subject for discussion in an out-group language, or in a language of specialized information. This type of behaviour may reflect some degree of insecurity as far as the local language is concerned. People may feel that a language other than the in-group language is necessary as a symbol of prestige due to the deity, and not infrequently the use of such a language expresses a people's desire to identify with a group of which they are not an immediate part. In Roman Catholicism the traditional tendency to use Latin reflects something of this same type of prestige status for a language of specialized information.

In circumstances where people do discuss religion (at least on certain levels) in a language other than that of the in-group, there are usually two quite distinct levels of religion. The religion of the home is actually discussed primarily in the local in-group language. This is essentially the "lower storey" of religion—what might be called the lower stratum of religious expression

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff., for concepts of "producer" and "consumer" language.

which lies beneath the veneer of a theologized form of expression. In contrast with this, the religion of the temple or the church may be expressed primarily in the out-group language or in a language of specialized information. Where there are two quite distinct languages involved in religious expression one will usually find quite distinct forms of religion, and in many instances people do not bring these two "levels of religion" together. Examples of this may be seen among Latin-American Indians in the existence of folk-Catholicism or Christo-Paganism alongside of more orthodox forms of Catholicism, and of African religious elements in the Voodoo and similar religions of the Caribbean;⁷ in the preservation of pagan elements of belief and practice by Christians in many parts of Africa; and in the practice of folk-Buddhism alongside of more orthodox Buddhist practices in different parts of Asia. In fact, even seminary graduates many times find it quite impossible to discuss their religious beliefs in the in-group language if their education has been carried on entirely in an out-group language or in a language of specialized information. The use of two different languages certainly accentuates the tendency toward departmentalization or compartmentalization of religious belief. At the same time this compartmentalization reinforces the seeming need for different languages in which to discuss the diverse though related systems of belief.

16. The Multiple Roles of Language

For the sake of simplicity of presentation the previous discussion has focused primarily upon the diverse roles of different languages in the distinct patterns of communication. Actually, however, the situation is far more complex than what might appear on the surface, for one and the same language may occur at different levels, even within a so-called three-language structure. For example, in Congo (Kinshasa) French may serve as an out-group language for certain types of general business contacts while at the same time serving as a language of specialized information. A language such as Lingala, which is an in-group language for many people, also serves as an out-group language for many others, especially on the lower levels of out-group contact in a capital such as Kinshasa.

Similarly, in the Philippines Pilipino serves as the medium of interpersonal communication on the lower level of the out-group contacts, while English functions on the upper level of the same type of interpersonal communication. Though at the present time English is distinctly the language of specialized information, there is considerable pressure, particularly from school teachers, to make Pilipino a language of specialized information, reaching at least through the secondary school system.

It is interesting to note that in the Philippines pressures for extending Pilipino to secondary education are coming primarily from the teachers themselves. One could expect such pressures to arise with nationalistic politicians or from such groups as might feel themselves handicapped because of inadequate preparation in the English language. However, the pressures

⁷ Cp. E. A. Nida, "Christo-Paganism", *Practical Anthropology* 8, 1-14 (1961); A. Metraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (London, 1959). See L. J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (Techny, Illinois, 1963), pp. 239-64, for discussion and bibliography.

actually have arisen from teachers, all of whom are theoretically competent to teach in English.

It is true, of course, that some teachers find it difficult to teach in English because their own preparation in the language is not especially good; but no doubt their real motivations (whether consciously so or not) stem from the fact that they have found it to be much easier to communicate in Pilipino than in English. In other words, the real problem does not lie with the inadequacy of the teachers so much as with the inadequacy of students in the processes of decoding or comprehension. It is instructive, therefore, to see that "ease of communication" is gradually taking precedence over the strategic value of a language for purposes of communicating specialized information. Such an attitude becomes justified on the basis that the number of individuals actually engaged in assimilating, using, and passing on technological information is likely to be relatively small. Therefore, the immediate gain in communicating information to a broad segment of the population outweighs any concern for promoting the use of what is essentially a "foreign" language.

Though the basic distinction between in-group languages, out-group languages, and languages of specialized information is fundamental, one must, of course, recognize that particularly in two-language and one-language structures different levels exist. The situation in Holland is particularly instructive in this regard. On the in-group level, for example, Dutch (in several of its minor dialectal forms) and Frisian serve as in-group languages. For most contacts, Dutch is also an out-group language in that it serves for a high percentage of those contacts which are beyond the face-to-face constituency. Dutch also functions as the out-group language for most Frisians, since Frisians all learn Dutch while only a few persons learn Frisian.

If, however, a person in Holland knows only Dutch, then the out-group contacts are relatively restricted, and this means that Dutch persons increasingly learn English, German, and/or French. Otherwise, the out-group range is too restricted for a technological and internationally oriented society.

Dutch, however, also serves the people of Holland as a language of specialized information since it is used on all levels of university training. Nevertheless, it does not serve as the exclusive language of specialized information, and any individual who wishes to go very far in his academic pursuits must master one or more foreign languages.

17. Language and Levels of Style

The distinction between in-group language, out-group language, and language of specialized information is closely parallel to certain distinctions in the level of style within an individual language. For example, an English-speaking person in the United States will generally use an informal or casual level of style in in-group contacts. For out-group contacts his level of style will probably be formal, sometimes called "regular", while as a language of specialized information the level of style is rather largely technical.⁸ A native speaker of English can regularly shift between these levels, and in fact is

⁸ Martin Joos, *The Five Clocks*. Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Pub. 22 (1962); see also Wonderly, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17.

hardly aware of the existence of such differences. Nevertheless, a person who does not speak English as his own mother tongue and has learned only one of the levels becomes immediately conspicuous when he tries to communicate in an area for which his linguistic experience has not prepared him. For example, many students from India studying in the United States have mastered a form of English which is distinctly "bookish". Though such students are quite competent in the area of technical or formal speech, their attempts at casual or informal use of English quickly betray their background.

As suggested in the previous paragraph, the same language often serves on radically different stylistic levels. Perhaps this is nowhere more vividly illustrated than in the different forms of English used in Liberia. The differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar of a Bassa-speaking person using English on the Firestone Plantation and of a high-level politician in Monrovia using English at a formal reception represent such a wide diversity of linguistic forms as to be scarcely identifiable as representing the same language.

In some multilingual situations, the functions of informal or casual style as over against a more formal or technical style are distributed among two or more languages. For example, bilingual speakers of Haitian Creole use the Creole in social situations that call for informal or casual speech, but standard French for more formal speech; so that standard French in Haiti tends to lack, for want of occasion for their use, the informal and casual expressions that are available in Parisian French, and the Creole of the same speakers tends to lack the potential for more formal use.⁹

18. Limitations of the In-group Language for Use in other Functions

Linguists have generally assumed that any language is adequate for communicating any and all ideas that the members of its speech community have occasion to deal with—granting, of course, that new terms may need to be borrowed or new expressions coined with the intrusion of new ideas. However, where the different communication functions are distributed among two or more languages, each of the languages is thereby, in actual practice, subject to certain limitations. The vocabulary gaps in out-group languages and languages of specialized information, as mentioned in a preceding section, are an example of this; as are also the limitations in style level in a case like that of Haitian bilingualism.

This is not a case of inherent inadequacy in either of the languages involved, but rather of a "social handicap"—that is, of limitations placed on one or both of the languages by the society itself. An in-group language therefore tends to be limited in its function to the communication of the kinds of information normally transmitted in interpersonal relationships within the local society, largely on an informal or casual level. In many two-language or three-language situations, the in-group language is unwritten, and is usually not standardized. "Outside" information, whether communicated in spoken or written form, tends to be limited to the out-group language or the language of specialized information, at least until such a time as it has been

⁹ William A. Stewart, "The Functional Distribution of Creole and French in Haiti", in Georgetown University Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, No. 15.

taken into the society and assimilated as "inside" information. Stewart mentions the possibilities of habilitating an in-group language such as Haitian Creole through standardization, to make it acceptable for other functions; but warns that a premature attempt to use it for other functions can lead to difficulties, "since the use of a language outside of its prescribed function without an accompanying change in its status is likely to be considered locally as inappropriate or even ludicrous."¹⁰

19. Language as a Class Privilege

In view of the increased importance of communication as a means of control of human beings, it is not at all strange that language should figure more and more prominently as a politically important instrument. The acquisition of a prestige language is thus regarded by many persons as one of the essential keys to success and social advancement. It is for this reason that many Indians in Latin America place such a high premium upon gaining a command of Spanish. Similarly, many Africans are keenly concerned about mastering English, French, or Portuguese, for such a language means not only acceptance by a ruling class but the possibilities of participation in the national life of the society.

If, however, language acquisition can thus be viewed as an instrument of upward mobility, the converse is also true. That is, the exclusive possession of certain language abilities can be regarded as a technique for perpetuating an oligarchic control. If a particular language is the exclusive language of education and if it is the essential medium for controlling technical information, it may for this very reason serve also to "keep people in their places" and thus guarantee a larger share of control for a privileged few. It is no wonder, therefore, that language policies are regarded by so many people as being the touchstone of class mobility and the guarantee of personal rights.

20. The Inevitability of Multilingualism in Many Parts of the World

Though the ideal of one nation and one language is a worthy goal, it is quite impossible for many present-day nations to think realistically in such terms. The close relationship between local languages and indigenous cultures means that people are not going to give up readily what seems to them to be their most distinctive heritage. Moreover, the diverse ethnic groups within any multilingual society have certain distinctive contributions to make; and making such a contribution almost inevitably requires a multilingual context if these different groups are to function in a way which is significant for the nation as a whole.

A very small language community may, of course, lack the necessary features of linguistic viability, and therefore over a period of a generation or two will lose its language. However, the number of languages which actually die out is far less than most people imagine. Therefore, new nations are obliged, if they are to be realistic at all, to face the necessity of a multilingual society for at least seventy-five to a hundred years.

¹⁰ William A. Stewart, "Creole Languages in the Caribbean", in Rice, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-53; quoted from p. 49.

Multilingualism need not, however, mean linguistic or political anarchy. Unity is, of course, more difficult in a multilingual society; but it certainly is not impossible. Moreover, monolingualism in a society by no means guarantees political uniformity or social agreement.

What is required in many new nations is not the elimination of linguistic minorities but sound principles of "linguistic engineering" by which the legitimate functions of various groups and the communication roles of their languages can be recognized and encouraged, so that within a two-language or three-language structure the highest degree of "mobility in ideas" may be guaranteed. The optimal utilization of existing languages is far more important than any enforced suppression of any of these means of communication.