

Exploring the Causes of Language Death: A Review Paper

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ABSTRACT: *This review paper is aimed at exploring the causes of language death. To be more specific, this paper seeks to describe the language death, and the major reasons behind the death of a language. The data collected through different online journal articles, websites, blogs, and social media. After critically evaluating the plethora of resources, it has been revealed that culture, bilingualism, migration and natural disaster respectively played a deteriorating role in language death. In addition, by looking to the current situation, recommendation can be proposed for researchers to carryout researches on the factors contributed to the language lost particularly in a society, region, and country.*

Keywords: language death, language extinct, culture, bilingualism, immigration, natural disaster

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture and way of life which is articulated in a several of behaviors including dressing, cuisines, and infrastructural services are very limited instances of variations. Amazingly, understanding of such cultures from the identified country, region and history can be gained through language. Regrettably, most civilizations are currently in threat, and the list of vanishing languages is growing. Language is one of the most effective tools we have as humans. We were unable to think in concept that others could realize, and we were unable to participate in the events that were typical in created culture (Di Pietro, 1994 was mentioned in (Hossain, 2016). Therefore, maintaining a language is vital for inheriting in the world with a special identify, culture, and prestige. Such traits can be gained through maintaining one's own language. If not so, then the language can be endangered and may no longer inhibit.

The literature has proposed several terms for death languages, for instance extinct, died, endangered, lost languages etc. as a matter of fact, numerous languages have been perished into the skirt of history and only their names are remained on the ears of people. Based on the National Geography Society report, within two weeks

one of the more than 7,000 languages uttered in the world die. Most languages slowly disappear as following generations of speakers become bilingual and lose proficiency in their original tongues. More than 50% of the globe languages have been vanished in the last 500 hundred years, and “as many as 60 to 90 percent of the world's approximately 6,900 languages may be at risk of extinction within the next 100 years,” according to the report. Based on the assumptions of the linguistics, one of the most essential criteria that whenever a minority language utility goes under 70% is undoubtedly leading toward fading (Woodbury, n.d.).

Moreover, researchers have indicated different reasons for language extinction, but the most common are the culture, bilingualism, migration and natural disasters (Atifnigar, Zaheer, et al., 2020; Calloway, 2020; Chauvot, 2016; Davis, 1999; Fillmore, 1991; Foltz, 2015; Gardner, 2014; Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, 2020; Guardado, 2002; Hill, 2002; Sandra G Kouritzin, 1999, 2000; Sandra Gail Kouritzin, 1997; Merino, 1983; Quesada Pacheco, 2016; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Waas, 1997). To be more specific, numerous cultures are greatly influenced or dominated by each other through which people's languages can be also influenced and later lead to demolishing of them. In some other situation, inhibitors might be mandated to stop their language use. For instance, Australia and USA mandated their inhibitors from their native culture to dwell in residential schools. In addition to such issues, wedding with different cultural people may also affect to loss their mother tongue. On the other hand, the key negative outcomes of L1 loss: losing of close relationships, poor self-image and culture, impaired school relations, and poor academic achievement. One of the threatening reason of language death, however, is when a society that were previously only speaking one language begins to utter another. “First language loss can relate to a lack of first language competence, a delay in first language development, or a gradual loss of previously acquired language skills.” Other terminology for this problem includes parametric bilingualism (Gardner, 2014), or a lack of growth of the first language; semi lingualism (Guardado, 2002b), or a shortage of development in both L1 and L2 languages and positive bilingualism, which refers to the effective development of two languages.

Furthermore, migration has a considerable impact in linguistic variation and language loss. When Proto-Indo-European utterers voyaged to much of Europe and major sections of Asia between 6,000 and 8,000 years ago, they most likely caused enormous linguistic change and language death. In some circumstances, languages may deteriorate or perish in their native setting while clinging to life in another. Examples may be found in immigrant groups ranging from New York to South Africa. Finally, several of the nations impacted by the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, which killed around 230,000 people, are also quite linguistically varied. India has 447 native languages and a Greenberg diversity index of 91.4 percent, whereas Indonesia has 706 native languages with an index of 81.6 percent (Calloway, 2020). Thus, the purposes of this paper are to explore the different definitions used for language death, and the major reasons behind the language death.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Languages Die?

Language is among the most useful tools that humans have. We couldn't convey our views to others if we didn't have it, and we couldn't participate in the activities that are common in the society we establish for ourselves if we didn't have it (Hossain, 2016). Language is crucial in schooling. For example, education is mostly carried out through the medium of language, hence language is extremely important in the educational process (Kuh & Umbach, 2004). Furthermore, as ADEA (2005) is mentioned in (Brock-Utne, 2012), “Language is not everything in education, but without language, anything in learning is nothing” (p. 5). Language plays an important part in learning, and if the learner is unable to communicate in the language of instruction, learning may not take place at all (Malekela, 2010). The genuine definition of a dead language is one that no longer has native speakers. It can happen in a variety of ways, but the outcome is that if there is just one person remaining who speaks the language as their native tongue and fluently, later the language may die. There is no special consideration to those group of people who are dwelling in particularly society and able to comprehend the language or ever utter a bit of. In addition, if there are still some elderly people who show declination in teaching the language to the youngsters could also lead the language to die (Jorda, 2015).

Why does a language die? Whenever a language absolutely prone to death, people and culture take a longer period of time and process; even takes several generations. By observing any dominant language on a specific context then an older language may slop to extinct (Harrison, 2008). Harison proposes a few stages of language death which are as the following:

- When children utter their mother tongue at home or with their relative then it is considered susceptible.
- When children do not study their mother tongue then it is considered susceptible.
- Whenever grandparent only speak their mother tongue and their young generation avoid of speaking in it can lead their language to death.

Culture

As mentioned earlier, culture has also played a vital role in survival of a nation's identify particularly its languages. However, there are various cultural reasons for dwindling of a language. The first one is that leads a language to death is the long-lasting colonizes or totally governed by another distinctive culture through which people's behavior, way of life, and language may be faded in the course of time. As a matter of fact, an empirical example is existed in North America in which native speakers who called themselves the first nation's inhabitants have already lost or endangered their mother tongue. In some circumstances, languages may deteriorate or perish in their native context while clinging to life in another. In addition, Instances may be found in immigrant groups ranging from New York to South Africa. Still, several death languages might be difficult to maintain since their heritage was primarily oral, with few written documents ever existing. Language is inextricably linked to culture. That is, the extinction of a language ruins people's ability to participate in cultural practices. They may lose access to tales and information that have been passed down for generations. This is one of the reasons why many people are fighting to rescue endangered languages today(Chauvot, 2016).

Besides, marriage can be also one the factors that endanger a language. Kravin showed in her research that loss or a lack of development of language abilities can be affected by the children of mixed marriages as well. Kravin investigated the linguistic development of his own Finnish-speaking six-year-old kid while studying English in an English L2 context (Guardado, 2002). Guardado (2002) identified four significant topics that arose from her participants' life history narratives, which explain the key negative repercussions of L1 loss: deteriorating family relationship, poor self-image and cultural identity compromised school relationships, and school achievement. Among those families, relationship, self-image, and cultural identities were the most influential factors in affecting their language. The respondents asserted that the most influential families were the loss of the extended family. Indeed, they those family were not able to talk with their relative for instance with uncles, aunts, cousin, grandpas who did not communicate in the English language also one them could not able to talk with his parents which can be more dangerous to his language loss. In line with this, Fillmore (1991) added, "what is lost is no less than the means by which parents socialize their children: when parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences" (p. 343). First language death can be due negative self-iamge and contradictory traditional identity of the people, later they become unfamiliar and do not understand their language though. In addition, they sometimes feel shy of their own culture and affected by adopting other cultural values. Finally, they are impacted the racism of the culture who are migrated people (Pompper, 2014).

Bilingualism

A language's extinction might begin in childhood or at a later age, such as the government or the aristocracy. Furthermore, the most typical cause of language death is when a population that formerly spoke only one language begins to speak another. The community first becomes multilingual, without abandoning their native language, but as time passes, people begin to utilize the new language more and more, until their original language is no more uttered (Atifnigar, Alokozay, Wahidullah, Zaheer, et al., 2020; Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). First language can be demolished where there is no development or delay in first language development, suspension in first language development, continuous loss of earlier-acquired language skills, the issue of

subtractive or additive bilingualism, semi bilingualism, lack of communications skills both L1 and L2 language (Cummins & Cameron, 1994; Nijat et al., 2019).

Merino (1983) performed a longitudinal research on the experience of growing up bilingual in the United States with Spanish-speaking primary school pupils. Among her participants, however, she apparently discovered greater language loss than bilingualism. She holds the government responsible. She accuses the government, teachers, politicians, and parents of being only concerned with the fast integration of minority language children into the educational system and their eventual success in society. She further alleviated that reducing the children's first language to second language position causes in a vast cost to the child's upcoming life and to society in general. Similarly, Sandra G Kouritzin (2000) support this findings that the school environment plays an essential role in developing children's first language (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999; Sandra Gail Kouritzin, 1997).

Waas (1997) discovered that a cohort of German speakers who immigrated to Australia at the age of 16 had significant LI loss after 20 years in Australia. Language change in the family appears to be another reason of fading the language. Children frequently take up the L2 at school and begin speaking it to their younger siblings. Some participants had elder siblings who were fluent in their native language but talked solely in English language. According to (Sandra G Kouritzin, 1999; Sandra Gail Kouritzin, 1997), some individuals had elder siblings who were fluent in their native language but only communicated in English. Other authors have written on comparable instances. Despite their weakness in second language skills, parents frequently switch to the second language in order to meet their children's preferences (Thomas & Cao, 1999), or in the idea that parents are assisting their children's L2 practice and supporting their integration in school, often by adhering to their children's teachers' suggestions (Sandra G Kouritzin, 1999, 2000; Sandra Gail Kouritzin, 1997; Schecter & Bayley, 1997).

Fillmore (1991) offered a gloomy image of minority youngsters studying English in the United States in his paper. She discovered that the younger the children are when they encounter the second language (second language), the larger the influence of the second language on their First language. She carried out a large-scale research involving families speaking minority languages and whose children had attended preschool programs in the United States. She discovered that many youngsters, particularly those who began studying English before the age of five, had already begun to lose their first language. She noticed that many of the youngsters had abandoned their first language before learning their second.

Immigration

Migration also has a significant impact on language change and language death. When Proto-Indo-European speakers traveled to much of Europe and major sections of Asia between 6,000 and 8,000 years ago, they most likely caused enormous linguistic change and language death. Basque may be the only current language in Western Europe that survived the Indo-European invasion. In some circumstances, languages may deteriorate or perish in their native setting while clinging to life in another. Examples may be found in immigrant communities ranging from New York to South Africa. Furthermore, many vanishing languages might be difficult to maintain if their heritage was primarily oral, with few written documents remaining (Zvelebil, 1995). Schecter and Bayley (1997) conducted a qualitative analysis of four Mexican-descent families, two from California and two from Texas, from a larger sample of 40 families. They aimed to comprehend the families' perspectives on their culture and heritage language, Spanish, and its function in their cultural identity, as well as the impact of their children's schooling in language preservation or loss. Schecter and Bayley discovered that all four families associated LI attrition with cultural identity loss. They blamed the school system in part, and at least one of the families got specific orders from the school not to speak Spanish to their children. Despite the fact that all of the parents in Schecter and Bayley's study had strong feelings about their cultural background and were committed to teaching Spanish to their youngsters as a means of saving their cultural identity and linkages with family and with their family background, some of the youngsters were not developing as fully bilingual. They also

discovered that children from households who had risen to the top of the social ladder managed the worst in terms of language retention.

Natural disasters

Some of the nations impacted by the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, which killed around 230,000 people, are also quite linguistically diverse. India has 447 indigenous languages and a Greenberg diversity rating of 91.4 percent, whereas Indonesia has 706 indigenous languages and an 81.6 percent Greenberg diversity index. When floods destroyed the Papua area of Indonesia, where the Dusner settlement is located, researchers had recently discovered the Dusner language, which had just a handful of remaining speakers. Fortunately, some of the speakers had survived, allowing the language to be recorded (Foltz, 2015). "Often, we do not know precisely what effect natural disasters have on the languages spoken in affected areas. What we do know though is that environmental pressures increase mobility and migration and that migration affects language change and death". A rise in climate-related disasters might hasten the extinction of languages. This would be a tragedy not only for the people and cultures involved, but also for cognitive research (Foltz, 2015).

Languages can alter or change rather than going extinct. "Have you heard that Latin is an extinct language? In some ways, it is. Today, no one speaks Latin as their first language". However, this does not imply that it is extinct. Latin is still used in a variety of contexts. It is used by scientists to name plants and animals. Religions, particularly Catholicism, use the terminology as well. Latin is, in reality, the official language of Vatican City. The language of Latin is not extinct. But why is it no longer widely spoken? The Roman Empire's official language was Latin. It quickly swept over the country. The Roman Empire then smashed in 476 CE. Latin developed rather than being extinct. In certain ways, the language is still alive and well today. It evolved into the Romance languages, which include Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian (Davis, 1999; Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; Hill, 2002).

III. CONCLUSION

This review papers are aimed at exploring in-depth insight the causes and reasons of language death or loss. After reviewing plethora of publications including journals, conferences papers, books, websites, blogs etc. after critically reviewing the sources, the most affective reason that endanger or ever extinct a language is the culture, bilingualism, immigration and natural disaster. Many cultures have been colonized or otherwise dominated by another culture in which language loss could happen. In some culture people were automatically stopped of uttering their first language and marriage endanger a language. In addition, researches showed that loss or a lack of development of language abilities can be affected by the children of mixed marriages as well. There are also four major reasons of fading of a language; first language loss: deteriorating family relationship, weak self-image and traditional personality, cooperated school rapports, and school achievement. First language can be demolished where there is no development or delay in first language development, suspension in first language development, continuous loss of earlier-acquired language skills, the issue of subtractive or additive bilingualism, semi bilingualism, and lack of communications skills both L1 and L2 language. Moreover, people who migrate form one nation to another nation can also cause someone' language loss; Migration also has a significant impact on language change and language death. Language can be died due natural disaster, such as earthquake, tsunamis, and flood and infection dieses. Finally, recommendation is provided to future to carryout factors that affect language death in a specific language, nation or country.

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