

FIFTH CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AND THE SPEAKER:
ALTERNATIVE IDENTITIES, NEW SPEECH COMMUNITIES AND CHANGING LINGUISTIC NORMS.

ABSTRACT BOOKLET

Paola Bocale (Milano)

Language shift and language revival in Crimea

This paper presents observations and findings from an ongoing research on language revival among Italian new speakers in Crimea. Victim of Stalin's mass deportations of minorities in the 1940's, the community experienced severe physical, demographic, social and cultural dislocation that led inexorably to language shift towards Russian. Through the use of questionnaires and interviews, the study explores the participants' attitudes and learning experiences as they are involved in the project of reviving the Italian community. Data show that members of the minority hold very positive attitudes towards Italian and feel very close to it even if only about 30% of those surveyed can speak the language. There is a mismatch between language attitudes and language competence, with the minority language more a symbol of ethnocultural identity than a tool for communication. Findings suggest that, beyond its instrumental value, a language can be a strong cultural symbol that reflects matters relating to identity and intergroup relations. The high symbolic status of Italian among members of the minority, the prestige enjoyed by the language in the mainstream community and demographic shifts are among the factors driving the growth of interest in reviving the Italian language among the younger generations.

Iris Orosia Campos Bandrés (Zaragoza)

Can "new" speakers save the Aragonese through Primary school? First results of a participatory action project focused on motivation

Aragonese is one of the most endangered European languages. In spite of the reports made by several experts (López, 2014) and international institutions as UNESCO (1999), who had highlighted that fact during decades, Aragonese government has developed very few actions related to its protection since now. One of the main areas where linguistic policies in favour of minority and endangered languages have to be implemented is the educational one (Crystal, 2000; Fishman, 1991). However, in Aragon Aragonese has been only thought as a subject in some Primary schools since 1997. Moreover, the lack of a standard variety has resulted in difficult and complex situations in some places where "traditional" speakers are rejecting Aragonese classes when the teacher is not a "traditional" speaker of their dialect. With the aim of changing this tendency, we are developing a participatory action research in one of the six schools where Aragonese is thought and rejected by students, under a case study design where we are focusing on motivation.

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UNESCO (1999). *Endangered Languages: Aragonese*. Obtenido de UNESCO Red Book on Endangered Languages: Europe: http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe_index.html.

Sarah Croome (SOAS)

Accommodation and Resistance in the Implementation of a Minority Language; A survey of headteacher attitudes across primary schools in Cornwall

Under the terms of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the UK Government undertakes to provide Cornish language teaching in Cornish schools. In practice, however, the language is **not** included in the curriculum and decisions on inclusion are made on an entirely voluntary basis by individual headteachers, making their language attitudes critical to the implementation of this endangered language. Thus, neither declarations of policy from Strasbourg, nor local visions and assistance, can be effective without commitment from individuals who are the final link in a fragile chain. There is a need to clarify the factors underlying uptake levels, and to

explore salient links between headteacher background, attitudes to Cornish and the decision to accommodate or resist implementation. Wider studies have demonstrated that teacher language attitudes influence pupil attitudes and their own pedagogic decisions, and that particular variables influence these attitudes. Empirical research by quantitative method was therefore carried out into headteacher attitudes to Cornish and its implementation in order to identify any such influential variables. The results obtained suggest that several underlying variables may influence attitude, but that self-identification as Cornish, by whatever criteria, is the best predictor of support for the language.

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska (Polish Academy of Sciences)

The 'resistance identity' of young European minority language speakers

Based on a 3 year ethnographic research project on language attitudes and the motivations for engagement in minority life among young people in four European linguistic minorities (Kashubs, Sorbs, Bretons and Welsh) I will discuss the relationship between being minority language speaker/learner/new-speaker and the creation of the linguistic identity. The paper shows the self-representation of young minority language speakers, the way they perceive the relation between using a minority language and being a part of a community. Both terms 'speaker' and 'community' will be relativized. Young people have to make constant language choices, which in contemporary linguistic market, unfavorable for minority languages, can be seen as the 'act of identity'. This makes them conscious of the minoritized situation of their group and provokes resistance against discrimination and engagement in minority issues. Young peoples' identity is constructed on the consciousness of the difficulties encountered in their minority language's past (oppression, shift, decline), their parents memories of language revival movements and on the contemporary discourse of language endangerment. Using Castells terminology we can designate their identity as 'resistance': derived from the actors within those cultures that are marginalized by dominant discourses and power relations, and who therefore try to resist and survive.

Vera Ferreira (CIDLS, Portugal)

Dynamics and tensions in the revitalization of Minderico

From the 16th century on, the blankets of Minde became famous all over Portugal. The wool carders and merchants of Minde began to use Minderico in order to protect their business from "intruders". Later, this secret language extended to all social and professional groups in Minde and became the main means of communication in the village. During this process, Minderico turned into a full-fledged language with a very characteristic intonation and a complex morphosyntax. Today Minderico risks becoming extinct, more than ever before in its history. Due to economic, social and educational reasons, the number of speakers declined drastically during the last 50 years. This situation has led to a revitalization process, which has started in 2009 in the framework of a DoBeS project financed by the Volkswagen Foundation. Five years of continuous revitalization activities are not enough to draw clear conclusions. However, there are some tendencies that can already be observed, for instance a discrete increase in the number of active speakers (among them several new speakers) and the emergence of a (de-)legitimization discourse, which opposes on the one hand different generations of speakers and, on the other, traditional speakers and new speakers. After a brief contextualization of Minderico, I will present a detailed characterization of Minderico new speakers, focusing on their role in the revitalization process. Thereafter, I will concentrate on the tensions that are arising from the new linguistic constellation in the speech community.

Harald Flohr (Cambridge)

The speakers of Irish, the prestige of the language and the changing identity of Ireland

'The speaker' (specifically the pupil) has always played a central role in Irish language policies – even before their official inception with Irish independence. The crucial role of the speaker for language maintenance or revitalization is not only self-explanatory, but empirically attested from the Hebrew experience (Nahir 1998, Dagut 1985, Bar-Adon 1977) and policy-makers in Ireland have been aware of it for a long time (Ó Laoire 1995, 1996, 1999, Ó Riogáin 1997). However, the success in revitalization has been moderate at best, while the language continues to retreat as a mother tongue. This tripartite paper will first explore the reasons for the failures with specific focus on the speaker-community from early times in the 19th century and the vital role that (a negative)

linguistic identity played from that period up to the late 20th century. This will be correlated with the 'holy grail' of intergenerational transmission and transfer out of schools for maintenance and revitalization respectively based on the Hebrew case. Finally, modern attitudes of speakers and of policy makers will be scrutinized through analysing the 20-year strategy, interviews with prominent policy-makers and theoreticians and a survey of L1- and L2-speakers' opinions. In conclusion, the question 'What more can be done?' will be addressed from a speaker-perspective.

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Lauren Gawne (Nanyang)

Divide and Survive: The construction of Syuba Identity and Language Maintenance in Nepal

Diaspora communities often look towards homeland identity as motivation for language maintenance and revitalisation. Language can be a powerful vehicle for identity construction, particularly in diaspora where it can serve as a key links to the homelands (Carter 2013, Coupland, Bishop & Garrett 2003: 153). In this paper I discuss two Tibetic language communities in Nepal; Lamjung Yolmo and Kagate (Syuba). Both have a diaspora relationship with Yolmo, itself endangered, but with higher social prestige and larger population (Hari 2010; Gawne 2013). Lamjung Yolmo and Kagate have almost identical narratives of migration from Yolmo homelands and both have small populations of around 1000 members. Traditional language use in these communities is under threat from Nepali and English, the languages of education and economic advancement. While Lamjung Yolmo use is in rapid decline, Kagate has strong intergenerational transmission, and a community committed to its ongoing use. I discuss factors that have lead to this relatively successful position. I argue that the Kagate speakers' ability to create a complex identity that both celebrates their Yolmo heritage and their current identity underlies this success. Kagate provides a positive example that larger speaker populations may not always be necessary.

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Alexandra Grey (Macquarie, AU)

The displacement of language as a mechanism of social inclusion in processes of language endangerment: the Zhuang case study

This paper analyses data from a 2014 ethnographic study of multilingual Zhuang students. The Zhuang are China's largest official ethnic minority, or 'minzu'. Restricted domains of usage and intergenerational non-transmission suggest Zhuang language is losing vitality. Zhuang language is being displaced as a mechanism of social inclusion, transforming norms of speech and identity, and reducing Zhuang language's "capital" (Bourdieu, 1991). Until the Minzu Classification Project (1950s), Zhuang-speaking people primarily understood themselves, and were understood by other groups and the state, as speaker group(s) not as an ethnicity. Language then became the primary tool of ethnic classification; speakers came to be understood by the state as ethnically Zhuang. Ongoing state construction of the *minzu* fostered Zhuang ethnonationalism. Zhuang language, however, remained the lodestone of Zhuang identity. Nowadays, identifying as a non-Zhuang-speaking Zhuang person, or partial speaker, is increasingly common and accepted by others, where a person is from Zhuang *minzu* stock. State promotion of an identity repackaged to include Zhuang language is therefore unlikely to take root in Zhuang communities. Moreover, the state no longer classifies by language, as "imaginable" (Mullaney, 2011, p. 16) ethnic communities are administratively reproduced; it is against state financial and polity-integration interests to promote minority language.

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Jeanette King, George Ann Gregory, & Nichole Gully (Canterbury, NZ)

How can RLS succeed after the first generation? A Māori case study

Fishman's seminal work (1991) on the factors necessary to ensure the success of emergent reversing language shift (RLS) strategies focuses on two elements: (1) that RLS needs to be part of a wider ethnocultural movement which provides necessary impetus and motivation, and (2) the importance of the home/neighbourhood/community nexus. This paper addresses the question of the continuing relevance and experience of these two factors in those RLS movements which are now several generations old by focussing on Te Reo Māori, which began implementing noted immersion schooling strategies in the early 1980s. We report results from two studies which shed light on these two factors in the context of second and third generation speakers. The first analyses self reported motivators of present day parents and young adults who are speakers of Māori. The second is an analysis of the form and role of communities amongst a wider age range cohort. The results raise questions about the importance of a wider ethnocultural goal in successive generations, the changing form and roles of communities to support speakers, as well as querying just what "success" in RLS might look like.

Ruth Kircher (McGill)

Getting the 'allophones' on board: Identity planning to revitalise French in Quebec

In Quebec, French faces the challenge of English not only as the global lingua franca but also as the language of upward mobility in North America at large. Particularly in the light of the precipitous plunge of Quebec's francophone birth rate, strategic measures are needed to stem the long-term decline of French. One crucial measure is the effective integration of the 'allophone' immigrants – i.e. those who have a mother tongue other than French or English – into the francophone community to achieve a significant increase in the number of French speakers. This integration process has entailed a diversification in the social make-up of Quebec's French-speaking population. As indicated by recent social and political tensions, this has not been unproblematic. This paper presents the first study to investigate the social identities held by the 'old-stock' francophones and the allophones who are integrating into Quebec's French-speaking community. The quantitative and qualitative findings yielded by this questionnaire-based study link these social identities with the participants' attitudes towards – and their resulting usage of – French. Conclusions are drawn regarding the need for further planning measures to help forge a strong, shared identity amongst Quebec's French-speaking community to help ensure the revitalisation of French in the province.

Andy Kirkpatrick (Griffith, AU)

The 1000 or more languages of ASEAN – secure or threatened?

In 2009 the ten countries which comprise the linguistically and culturally diverse Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ratified the ASEAN Charter. This privileges English by making it the *sole* working language of the group. At the same time, the Charter calls for respect for the languages, religions and cultures of the member states. In this presentation I shall consider the implications of the inherent contradiction between making English the sole working language while calling for respect for the languages of the region. By reviewing a selection of the region's language education policies, I shall argue that, far from developing respect for local languages, policies of the majority of the countries emphasise the learning of the respective national languages and English. This promotion of the national language plus English represents a serious threat to many of the region's one thousand + languages, as well as placing serious obstacles in the educational paths of the children who do not speak their respective national language as a mother tongue. The presentation will conclude by critically considering whether the recently introduced Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) policy of the Philippines represents a potential model for the maintaining or transmitting of the region's endangered languages.

Tymoteusz Król (Association *Wilamowianie*) &
Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (Adam Mickiewicz University)

Relay of Generations between the Last and the 'New' Speakers: Reviving the language, identity and community of Wymysiöeryś in southern Poland

The town of Wilamowice (southern Poland) is the unique home to the community of speakers of *Wymysiöeryś*. The language enclave originates from Colonial Middle High German and – according to diachronic dialectological analyses – made up a sub-exclave of the so-called *Bielitz-Bialaer Sprachinsel*. As a result of social and political cataclysms brought by the WWII and the following ban on and gap in its intergenerational transmission, it faced an inescapable language death. That doom, however, has been restrained by the activities of dedicated native speakers, with Tymoteusz Król (born in 1993) functioning as an eco- and sociolinguistic relay between the generation of last speakers passing away and unexpectedly growing group of potential 'new' speakers. The microlanguage, now spoken as native by less than three dozen Wilamowiceans, and still without any official recognition at the administrative level, is experiencing an astonishing, but well-prepared and local culture-based revitalisation course. The paper intends to dialogue the current achievements and challenges of the revival processes for *Wymysiöeryś* – from an internal (T. Król as the youngest native speaker and intra-community researcher) and external (T. Wicherkiewicz as participating academic) perspectives, including the recent results of and actions undertaken within an integral revitalisation programme based on the successful collaboration of the community, two major universities in Poland as well as the local school and municipal authorities. Efficiently combining grassroots and top-down approaches, we also ground language revitalisation in the social, cultural and economical benefits of preserving and extending local cultural heritage and linguistic landscape.

Douglas McNaught (SOAS)

The Curious Case Of Karuruan: How A Minority Language Became The Lingua Franca Of An Entire Community

Many minority languages fall to the dominance of larger, more powerful language groups. However, the small coastal community of Karuruan in Jici village, Taiwan, is unique: it is a stronghold for Sakizaya language and culture despite only 10% of the population being ethnically Sakizaya. Originally settled by 5 families, Jici has seen numerous (forced) migrations from neighbouring areas over the past 100 years to the point where the original ethnic population have become vastly outnumbered. Nevertheless, their language and traditions have remained strong and, after the tribe gained official recognition in 2007, many residents chose to officially register as Sakizaya regardless of their ethnic heritage or birthplace. *Following economic stagnation many young residents left the area to find work in larger cities, leaving behind an aging population and a language on the verge of extinction. However, new government-backed initiatives in aboriginal tourism propose to bring back both economic security and a renewed interest in cultural and linguistic preservation.* Through

interviews with local residents, this paper examines the unique historical circumstances that led to the current linguistic situation in Jici; local attitudes towards recent issues of identity, cultural assimilation and their effects on language use; and the outlook for language preservation.

Anik Nandi & Ashvin I. Devasundaram (Heriot-Watt)

Contesting the Conventionalising of Castilian: Galician Newspeaker Parents as Counter-Elites

Recent LPP research reveals how policy-makers endorse the interests of dominant social groups, marginalise minority languages and perpetuate systems of socio-lingual inequality (Tollefson 1991, 2013; Ricento and Cassels-Johnson 2013). This paper examines the Castilian-dominated Galician linguistic landscape, perceiving the rise of grassroots level actors or agents. These include teachers, parents, family members, language activists and new speakers of minority Galician who play a significant role in interpreting and implementing language policy on the ground. This study locates these individuals as ‘counter-elites’ (Rocher 1972; Leicht and Jenkins 2009), generally comprised of the educated Galician demographic, who if disillusioned with policy decisions of ruling state elites may develop alternative discourses of resistance to hegemonic ideologies. This analysis centres on Galician parents as counter-elite intermediaries, implementing individual language policy within the contours of home space. Drawing from in-depth fieldwork interviews with several newspeaker Galician parents, this paper demonstrates that in Galicia’s language shift-induced shrinking orthodox native speaker pool, newspeakers can occupy an important role in the language revitalisation process. The endeavour is to ascertain whether Galician newspeaker parents can restore intergenerational transmission and if their microcosmic interrogation of the dominant discourse could lead to bottom-up language policies at the grassroots level.

Mario Pinharanda Nunes (Macau)

Comedy plays in Makista and its ‘new’ speakers

Makista was rated as ‘severely endangered’ according to the UNESCO 2006 guidelines for **Language Vitality and Endangerment** assessment (Pinharanda Nunes 2013). No organized revitalization effort has yet been put together for Makista. The heritage communities are, nevertheless, conscious of the dire need to maintain a living memory of it for future generations. Community-based efforts to incentivize the maintenance of Makista function on irregular bases and mainly target the elder members of the Makista community associations. In Macao, the *Docí Papiaçam* theatre group is the exception. Since the 1980s they have staged, on average, two performances yearly. This has won them increasing popularity among the heritage community and in Macao in general. Despite generational transmission cut one or two generations ago, through their performances, a slowly increasing number of youth have been attracted to participate and have begun to learn their heritage language via the scripts. These plays have even spread Makista beyond the heritage community.

This paper draws on a sociolinguistic survey of the use of Makista by these ‘new speakers’, assessing: their use of it; notions and definitions of diverse proficiency levels among ‘new’ and ‘old’ speakers, and attitudes, among other diverse *specific socio-psycholinguistic traits* (Grinevald & Bert 2004).

Grinevald, Colette, and Bert, Michel (2004). *Speakers and communities*. In Peter Austin and Julia Sallabank (eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*, pp 45-65. Cambridge University Press.

Pinharanda Nunes, Mario ‘To Preserve, or not to preserve Makista: opinions and practices of its heritage community’, paper presented at the ACBLPE & SPCL joint meeting, 19-21 July 2013, University of Lisbon (unpublished)

Dave Sayers (Sheffield Hallam)

Using language to help people, or using people to help language? A typology of language acquisition planning

Recruitment of new speakers is a somewhat overlooked variable in comparing different language planning efforts. Yet this gives an interesting window into their varying rationales. This paper offers a structured comparison of a range of case studies, working towards a typology. At one end of the typology is a case study where speaker numbers are growing, but not due to language planning. Instead, planning focuses on acquisition of the majority language whilst respecting and celebrating the

minority language – aiming to improve wellbeing and counter disadvantage. This is African American Vernacular English (AAVE) where the language itself, though celebrated, is ultimately not the priority. At the other end of the typology is a language that has not had any native speakers for centuries. Planning efforts here focus on recreating a community of speakers from scratch. By contrast to AAVE, the language itself is the sole normative focus, without significant attention to quality of life. This is the Cornish language revival, which instead focuses on themes of heritage and identity. A range of case studies between these extremes is presented, making up a six-point typology of how new speakers are prioritised relative to language, and how this relates to overarching normative orientations.

Charlotte Selleck (Worcester)

'We're learners of Welsh, not proper fully Welsh'; A discussion of how students' at an English-medium school orientate to and construct legitimacy in a minority language

This study forms part of a larger ethnographic project investigating the interplay of linguistic practices, linguistic representations, language ideologies and social inclusion between students at three related research sites in south-west Wales; a designated English-medium school, a designated Bilingual school and a Youth Club. I broadly adopt the dichotomy presented by Blackledge and Creese (2010) – that of 'flexible' and 'separate' bilingualism, with the former referring to the English-medium school. It will be suggested that despite an apparent reliance on 'flexible' bilingualism at the English-medium school, boundaries continue to be put up around languages and language users resulting in clear divisions between the 'English' and 'Welsh' students, with 'first-language' Welsh speakers placed in opposition to 'good learners' with the later being held in higher regard. It will be argued that students struggle to position themselves in terms of the national category of being Welsh, with a language hierarchy emerging, with students at the Welsh school being considered 'proper' or 'fully' Welsh. That said, it will be demonstrated that students at the English school could construe a Welsh identity without the need for Welsh, with their use of Wenglish viewed as one way in which they could negotiate and position themselves within the national category of being Welsh.

Ari Sherris, Tachini Pete, & Erin Haynes (Texas A&M)

Knowledge is being: Salish-Pend d'Oreille Conceptual Metaphors and Speaking

The intergenerational transmission of Salish-Pend d'Oreille, a critically endangered language spoken in Montana, USA has been a concern of tribal elders for over a generation. With fewer than 50 fluent speakers, much is known about the phonological and morphosyntactic structure of the language, as well as its folklore through dedicated documentation. In the last 25 years, materials have been developed for both school-aged and adult heritage language learners that have been sensitive to this important linguistic work, as well as exploring pedagogical approaches in second language acquisition. Indeed, by all accounts the application of linguistic knowledge and folklore has supported language learning. Dedicated teachers, elders, tribal leaders, and activists devote themselves to language revitalization in multiple contexts and over a sustained period as well as across age groups. The purpose of this paper is to share an innovation in speaking and listening pedagogy that arose from the documentation and analysis of 19 core conceptual metaphors. In terms of linguistics, the documentation breaks new ground by developing a deeper understanding of the semantics of the language. For learners, the paper argues, the metaphors can potentially reduce calquing and close the gap between fluent first language speakers and heritage second language learners.

M. Olimpia Squillaci (Cambridge)

(Dis-)advantages from the revitalisation of 'useless' dialects: The case of Greko and Rumeiko

The regions of Calabria (Italy) and Crimea (Ukraine) were respectively the South-Western and North-Eastern borders of the Byzantium Empire from IX-XI cent. During this period they spoke one language, Greek, whose local varieties, Greko and Rumeiko respectively, are still spoken in both regions today. However, they are highly endangered languages, for which reason multiple initiatives have been established to aid the revival of these varieties. These initiatives have resulted in considerably different outcomes: in Italy, they became a tool for crystalizing the status quo of the language, leading to its 'folklorisation', whereas in Ukraine the programmes increased young people's interest in Modern Greek rather than enhancing the number of Rumeiko speakers. The present talk

aims to explore the causes behind the different results of the revitalisation programmes in Italy and Ukraine. In particular, the economic and cultural prestige of Greece is considered as one of the major causes determining young people's attitude towards the local Greek variety and, more generally, Greece itself. Whereas in Italy young people sought to avoid being associated with the 'useless dialect' and with Greece, in Ukraine, this linguistic association opened up access to Greece and to the European Union, including the possibility of dual nationality.

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Catherine Young (SIL)

Effective and sustainable mother tongue-based multilingual education practices in non-dominant language communities

Urbanisation, economic development systems and the impact of global technologies have impacted language use patterns and culture of learners from non-dominant language communities influencing language vitality and intergenerational transmission of language. This paper will describe approaches to mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) that aim to enable learners to access quality education in multiple languages without sacrificing their own ethnolinguistic and cultural identities. It will also reflect on the sociolinguistic, political and historical issues that impact the successful implementation of education in non-dominant and endangered languages.

The paper will describe the constraints and enablers of effective and sustainable MTB-MLE and share conclusions and recommendations arising from research in the Philippines and the authors' experiences in MTB-MLE design and development elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia. A discussion on the increased need for evidential research on the impact of mother tongue-based multilingual education and improved awareness-raising and advocacy among influential stakeholders including the speech community will be included. It will also consider issues surrounding strengthening of government capacity in the delivery of equitable education and the empowerment of local communities to establish sustainable local education structures, responsive to local needs and contributing to language maintenance and revitalisation.

Shirley Yul-Ifode (Port Harcourt)

Endangerment or Globalisation of minor languages in Nigeria: Evidence from Child Language Development

Halting the extinction of the minority languages in Nigeria has been the concern of historical linguists for some time, but not from the angle of early childhood and the family. This paper addresses language development in the early childhood period, the role of the family environment in this process, and the consequent maintenance or endangerment of the language. Using a simple survey method, responses were elicited from members of selected languages in multilingual communities on their language choice in different settings with their under-six children. Their responses were compared with the actual observed practices of language use with these children. Our findings reveal

that although most respondents claim to prefer and advocate for the use of the mother tongue with their children, they do not actually practice it. When they do, they guard against the future interference of their mother tongue with the development of 'their English' or the other tongue. Just as it is very unlikely that the English language will cease to maintain its present position in the country, it is also unlikely that these languages will change their position in the future. Perhaps, endangerment is part of a natural change from multilingualism to globalisation of languages.