

Contact languages and the preservation of endangered languages

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Abstract

Of the 6000 languages in the world, half have less than 10,000 speakers, and a quarter less than 1000. Accumulations of small languages have led to widespread bi- and multilingualism, with more than half of the world's languages spoken by bi- and multilinguals. Many larger languages are used as contact languages. Many of such contact languages become simplified. Pidgin languages are different. They develop through attempts at basic intercommunication between speakers of different languages. They have a limited vocabulary, and a limited grammar. If a pidgin language is extensively used, it develops and becomes richer. It eventually becomes the first language of children as a creole language. Chabacano is a typical example. As a well functioning language spoken by many over a long time, it is a full language. Small and minority languages tend to become endangered, largely through pressure from monolingual speakers of large dominant languages and adverse governmental language policies. About 1970, a widespread revival of ethnic identity feeling started among speakers of minority languages, and governments often changed their language policies to positive ones. Many people kept their own languages. Bi- and multilingualism has advantages over monolingualism in matters of applied intellect, and memory and learning capacities. More languages survive now.

Key words: bi- and multilingualism, contact languages, pidgin language, creole language, language endangerment, language reinvigoration.

Resumo

Das 6 mil linguas que hai no mundo, a metade ten menos de 10 mil falantes, e un cuarto menos de mil. A acumulación de linguas pequenas conduciu a un amplo bi- e plurilingüismo, nos cales máis da metade das linguas do mundo son utilizadas por falantes bilingües ou plurilingües. Moitas das ditas linguas en situación de contacto estanse simplificando. As linguas pidgin son diferentes. Desenvólvense para a comunicación básica entre falantes de diferentes linguas. Teñen un vocabulario limitado e unha gramática igualmente limitada. Se unha lingua pidgin acada un uso amplo, desenvólvese e chega a ter unha maior riqueza

lingüística. Mesmo pode convertese na variedade nativa de nenos e nenas en forma de crioulo. O chabacano é un exemplo típico. En tanto que é unha lingua totalmente funcional falada por moitas persoas durante un longo período de tempo, é unha lingua completa. As linguas pequenas e minoritarias tenden a estar en perigo, principalmente pola presión dos falantes monolingües das linguas dominantes e da planificación lingüística governamental adversa. Arredor de 1970, un amplo *revival* dos sentimentos identitatios étnicos comezou entre os falantes de linguas minoritarias, e moitos gobernos cambiaron as súas políticas lingüísticas por outras máis positivas coas linguas minoritarias. Moitas persoas mantiveron as súas linguas. O bilingüismo e o plurilingüismo ten vantaxes sobre o monolingüismo en termos de capacidades intelectuais aplicadas, de memoria e de aprendizaxe. Máis linguas sobreviven agora.

Palabras clave: bilingüismo e plurilingüismo, linguas de contacto, linguas pidgin, linguas crioulas, extinción lingüística, revitalización lingüística.

1. Introductory remarks

There are about 6000 living languages in the world today. About half of these are spoken by less than 10,000 speakers each, and a quarter of these by less than 1000 speakers each. There are comparatively few languages spoken by a million or several million speakers, and only a very small number indeed of languages with over a hundred million speakers.

2. Intercommunication and contact languages

For thousands of years, human beings felt the need to communicate with other human beings speaking a language which was different from their own, especially for the purpose of the exchange of goods and trade. There is also the so-called ‘silent trade’ which had been observed, largely in by-gone days, but still found in some parts of the world today, between members of different small tribes. This means that the members of one tribe put their goods on the ground, for instance in a clearing in a forest, and withdraw out of sight. Their trading partners who are usually traditional enemies of the first tribe, appear, take the deposited goods, put their own exchange goods on the ground, and withdraw, which allows the members of the first tribe to reappear, and collect the exchange goods. Such ‘silent trade’ is rare, because it makes impossible one of the important features of trade (be it by the exchange of goods or by money or other valuables as payment for goods) i.e. haggling and specifying the nature of exchange goods for one’s own to take place.

Neighbouring tribes commonly speaking different languages, were usually hostile to each other in the past, and to some extent still today, for instance in parts of New Guinea, Africa and South America, especially so small tribes (and small speech communities) in tropical jungle areas, or also sub-arctic North American Indian tribes on one hand and Eskimos on the other. However, most of them met

peacefully at certain times and locations for the purpose of trade, the settlement of mutual claims arising from casualties and death of members of the tribes involved, or even for some ritual purposes in which otherwise hostile tribes participated. For these purposes, the members of the tribes involved had to be able to communicate with each other. However, their respective languages were usually different, especially so when several small languages were involved. A solution for this problem was therefore called for. One simple solution resorted to especially in a few areas in the New Guinea region between usually mutually very hostile tribes was to exchange children who stayed permanently with the opposite tribes, learned to speak their languages, and acted as interpreters in situations of attempted intercommunication between members of the two (or several) hostile tribes in the peaceful encounters between them mentioned above. Such children were fully protected by all sides and were never harmed, and could freely move between the tribes as may have been required.

While the above approach is rather rare in the world, it is much more common for at least some members, but sometimes for most of the male members or even for all members of neighbouring tribes and speech communities whose relations with each other are friendlier, at least for some period, than in the cases referred to above, to acquire some knowledge of each other's languages. This knowledge may be only passive, i.e. the members of the two or several tribes involved *understand* each other's languages, but only speak their own. This is quite common in parts of Siberia where members of individual speech communities understand, often effortlessly, several languages, but only speak one or two, or perhaps three. Similar situations are found in the New Guinea area, in Africa, South America, Assam in India, in the Himalayan region, etc. This phenomenon is referred to as *passive bi- and multilingualism*. In quite a few parts of the world, there is *active bi- and multilingualism* between neighbouring speech communities. This is especially so in areas where relations between neighbouring speech communities are mainly friendly, or where there is strict exogamy, i.e. the marriage partner must always come from a different tribe and speech community, or also when neighbouring languages are rather similar, as in parts of Island Melanesia. This exogamy culture which is generally found in areas where tribes and speech communities are small to very small (100 or less, or perhaps some very few hundred members of each), is very likely the result of the realization by the members of such small communities that endogamy (i.e. marriage between members of the same community) resulted in inbreeding, with its usual disastrous results.

Such active bi- and multilingualism by at least some members of usually small, but not necessarily so, individual speech communities, is very common in most parts of the world. In fact, well over half the languages of the world are spoken by bi- and multilinguals, be it by some members of the speech communities, or by many or even all of them. This has traditionally been the case amongst speakers of Australian

Aboriginal languages and continues to be the case today for several of the surviving Australian languages. It is common in the New Guinea area, in Island Melanesia (for instance in Vanuatu), in Borneo, South America, formerly also in North America, in Africa, very strongly in India, and is also common in the Philippines. There are 150 languages in the Philippines, mostly relatively small or very small ones, and ten very large languages such as Tagalog, Ilokano, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Bikol, etc. whose speakers constitute about 90% of the population. Most of the speakers of the small languages are actively or at least passively bilingual in one of the very large languages, and frequently multilingual. Their bilingualism in one of the very large languages is one-way, i.e. the speakers of the latter tend to speak only their own large Philippine language, though they may be bilingual in English. These very large Philippine languages are typical examples of contact languages. Tagalog for instance has 10 million or more first-language speakers, but is spoken or at least understood by over 40 million. There are several very large contact languages in the world. English is at present the most widespread contact language, functioning as such in many parts of the world. Formerly, French was a widespread contact language, but it has lost this role to English. Russian was the contact language in the former USSR and in Eastern Europe, but has lost this function in the latter region where English is penetrating as a contact language used predominantly by younger people, though German still functions to some extent as a contact language there, used mainly by older people. In the former USSR, the function of Russian as a contact language is also receding, especially in Central Asia and in parts of Siberia where local contact languages are taking over its role. Mandarin Chinese is the contact language in China for intercommunication between speakers of the local varieties of Chinese which are not mutually intelligible, as well as for communication between Chinese and speakers of the many non-Chinese languages in China, and for intercommunication between the latter. Swahili is a widespread contact language in eastern Africa, Indonesian is the contact language between speakers of the hundreds of languages in Indonesia, Tok Pisin that between speakers of the more than 800 languages of Papua New Guinea, etc. There are, in the world, also a large number of local contact languages which have currency in more restricted areas, and are often used essentially for trading purposes, such as Tausug in the Philippines and Sabah centred on Jolo and the Sulu Archipelago. It has about half a million first language speakers, and about the same number of second language speakers. Other such local contact languages are found in the New Guinea area, in Africa, South America, etc. (Wurm, Mühlhäusler & Tryon, 1996). A contact language is also often referred to as *lingua franca* (plural *lingue franche*) which is the name of an Italian-based contact language in the Mediterranean area from about 1300AD until the 19th century.

Many of the local contact languages, and several of the larger ones, are simplified versions of local languages. This is especially so where such contact languages are used in areas where many to very many small local languages are

spoken. This is for instance the case in much of the New Guinea area where a total of over 1100 local languages are found, with about 850 of them in Papua New Guinea. Several such contact languages have their origins in local languages adopted by Christian missions as their church and mission languages. In spreading beyond the often very narrow limits of these local languages used as mission languages, they were simplified in their structures by speakers of other local languages who found it difficult to learn some of the complicated grammatical forms, especially of the verbs, of the original mission languages. With the cessation of outside, missionary activities in Papua New Guinea, several of these simplified missionary contact languages continued to be used as secular *lingue franche* and contact languages. When an original mission language spread to other areas outside its borders where languages closely related to it were spoken, the simplifications affecting that mission contact language were comparatively slight. An example of this is the Kâte language in northeastern Papua New Guinea, in the eastern part of the Huon Peninsula which at the time of its adoption as the church language of the Lutheran mission in the 1880s had only a few hundred speakers. It spread widely among speakers of languages closely related to Kâte, and eventually became a secular contact language in the second half of the 20th century, spoken and understood by about 60,000 people in a large part of the Huon Peninsula. It is now being superseded by Tok Pisin, the national language of Papua New Guinea.

A special category of contact languages are the so-called Pidgin languages. These develop in situations of minimal and rudimentary communication requirements between two groups of people, one usually superior to the other in economic and political power. In many cases, but by no means always, the superior, and dominant, group is, or was, from an outside metropolitan civilization as a colonial or colonizing power, with the other constituting the local population of the respective areas. Such a Pidgin language had, at least in its initial stage, a limited vocabulary containing words from the language of the dominant people, usually with a pronunciation reflecting the language(s) of the locals, plus words from the language(s) of the latter, and a simple grammatical structure, with mostly only short sentences, which reflected features of the language(s) of the locals, plus some features of the language of the dominant language (this language is called the 'donor language'). If such a Pidgin language continued to be used for a long time in increasingly complicated situations, it became more and more sophisticated, richer and more complicated grammatically and in the composition of its vocabulary. If it was also used as a contact language among locals who spoke different languages, it became even more complicated in its grammar which reflected more complex features of the local languages, had longer, involved sentences reflecting syntactic features of the local languages, a pronunciation moving even further away from that of the simple initial form of the Pidgin language, and an increasingly larger and more sophisticated lexicon which reflected more and more the ways in which the

vocabulary was structured in the local language(s), though the majority of the words were still of the ‘donor language’, but often with changed meanings and a pronunciation differing more and more from that of these words in the ‘donor language’.

The English-based Pidgin contact language of Papua New Guinea, originally called New Guinea Pidgin and now Tok Pisin, has gone through all the stages mentioned above, and being a local-to-local contact language from its very beginning in 1880, it is now the national language of Papua New Guinea, a language spoken as a second language by about three and a half million Papua New Guineans out of a population of over four million. It is a sophisticated language, with a quite complicated grammar reflecting complex features of Melanesian languages, especially of one of them, a rich vocabulary, and is incomprehensible to English speakers who find it quite difficult to learn it properly. It is extensively used in broadcasting, the media, to some extent in education, and in contacts between high-ranking officials, even if they know English. Similar, now highly sophisticated, English-based Pidgin languages are Bislama, the national language of Vanuatu, and to a lesser extent, the Solomon Pijin language of the Solomon Islands, which has not quite reached the sophistication level of Tok Pisin and Bislama.

In addition to English-based Pidgin languages in the Pacific area, there were Pidgins based on other languages there, for instance Portuguese Pidgin which is virtually extinct in the Pacific, except for some old speakers in Malacca in the Malay Peninsula, and some in Java. It is still spoken to some extent in India. There was also a Pidgin based on Spanish.

A number of Pidgin languages existed in the Pacific which were based on one (or two) local languages and served essentially trading purposes. Most of these are endangered or extinct today. However, one such Pidgin language in the former British New Guinea (which was in the southeastern portion of the New Guinea island at the end of the 19th century), which was based on the Melanesian Motu language spoken in an area where Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, is situated today, was adopted by the indigenous police force as their business language in the early days and was therefore called Police Motu (its present name is Hiri Motu). Its vocabulary is essentially that of true Motu, but its structure is quite different, and some features of its pronunciation also differ from those of true Motu. It spread widely through the southeastern part of the New Guinea mainland, and became the contact language of over 200,000 indigenes in that area. Today it is one of the three official languages of Papua New Guinea, the other two being Tok Pisin (the national language), and English.

At this point, the very important concept of Creolization of Pidgin languages has to be mentioned. When a Pidgin language is used more and more, and is gradually replacing local languages in many situations, two things are happening: if the language is not yet sophisticated enough to fully serve the needs of expression within

the culture of its speakers, it will gradually expand its richness and sophistication until it can meet all needs of expression of its speakers. It may gradually replace the original local languages of its speakers, unless the speakers attach special emotional value to their local languages. In such a case, it will mainly be used for intercultural and intertribal communication only, as is very much the case with Tok Pisin, though even that is beginning to usurp the roles of local languages in some areas of Papua New Guinea. The second event taking place if the speakers of the local language(s) do not attach special emotional value to them, is that the children learn the now well sophisticated Pidgin language as their first language, i.e. it becomes their mother tongue. In Papua New Guinea, Tok Pisin usually only tends to become the children's first language in mixed marriages in which the family language is Tok Pisin which is usually the case in the towns, outside the tribal areas. With the children growing, they use Tok Pisin or in other areas of the Pacific, the areal sophisticated Pidgin language, as their first language. Such a language is referred to as a *Creole* language which has developed from an original Pidgin language through the process of *Creolization*.

A typical case of this in the Philippines is Chabacano, the first language of close to 300,000 speakers. It is a Spanish-based Creole with predominantly Spanish-derived vocabulary, and Philippine-type grammatical structure. It is the major language of Zamboanga city, used in broadcasting, the press and in primary education.

Is there any difference between a fully functioning Creole which serves its speech community in all aspects of its culture and social life, and another 'original' language, be it a local or a metropolitan language? Basically, no. One peculiarity of a Creole language is that outsiders, especially speakers of the language which has been the 'donor language' (see above for this term) of the Pidgin language from which a particular Creole language has emerged and developed, tend to look down upon it and regard it as not a real, separate language, but as a distorted form of their own. Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea suffered this fate while it was under an English-speaking colonial administration, and the irony of it was that most of the outsiders, mainly Australians, living in Papua New Guinea at that time, never tried to learn Tok Pisin properly, but spoke a distorted form of English themselves in dealing with locals, believing it to be Tok Pisin, largely because locals who had frequent dealings with such outsiders, learned that jargon quickly themselves so that the outsiders could understand them. The real Tok Pisin was unintelligible to them, and village locals who did not know that jargon (contemptuously called 'Tok Masta' by the locals) and used Tok Pisin to them, were believed by them to be speaking a local language, not Tok Pisin. Characteristically, those outsiders who could speak Tok Pisin like the locals, were mostly missionaries from non-English-speaking countries such as Germany who regarded and learned Tok Pisin as a non-English foreign language and learned it properly, as did some outside linguists who studied local languages. After the independence of Papua New Guinea, and the eventual elevation of Tok Pisin

to the rank of national language of the country, and high-ranking Papua New Guinea officials and other personalities started using it in preference to English when talking to each other, and with the beginning of Creolization of Tok Pisin, mainly in the large towns and on the Admiralty Islands, English speakers had to correct their derogatory views about it, and had to learn it properly when dealing with Papua New Guineans in the country. However, with Australians and other English speakers who have no direct contact with Papua New Guinea, the belief that Tok Pisin is an inferior language and a terrible corruption of English, still lingers on.

Turning to Chabacano, it is certain that when Chabacano was a Spanish-based Pidgin that turned into a Spanish-based Creole, with Philippine grammatical structure, the Spanish speakers looked upon it with the same contempt as did the English speakers with Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. Traces of this attitude may linger on in the Philippines today, long after the Spanish speakers have largely disappeared. The answer to such an attitude is simple: it should be ignored. Chabacano is a fully-fledged, complete language, and its speakers can have pride in it.

3. Threatened languages

It has been mentioned above that some contact languages have become endangered, and some of them extinct. This is a fate that affects many other languages of the world too, not just contact languages. The reasons for this are often contempt and oppression of such languages by, usually monolingual, speakers of dominant metropolitan languages who believe in monolingualism being a normal and desirable state to be in, and wish to see speakers of small and minority languages to adopt their own large languages and forget their own small or minority languages, though their speakers could acquire a good knowledge of the metropolitan languages and keep their own, i.e. be bilingual. Until about 1970, such negative attitudes against small and minority languages were present in very many parts of the world. About 1970, there started a re-awakening of a feeling of ethnic identity among speakers of small and minority languages in quite a few parts of the world, with speakers of such languages taking an increasing interest in them, and being more and more concerned about their preservation and maintenance. This coincided in the 1970s and later, with a change of attitudes of speakers of dominant metropolitan languages, and government policies guided by them, from negative to positive or at least neutral in several important areas in the world, such as Australia, Japan, Canada, parts of Europe, e.g. Britain, Scandinavia, the former Soviet Union after the collapse of communism (in particular in Siberia), quite recently also in Italy. Unfortunately, the negative attitudes mentioned above still continue in Indonesia, much of Africa, the USA and in some other areas.

For the preservation and maintenance of a small or minority language in the orbit of a large dominant language, the basic requirements are the interest and will of the speakers to preserve and maintain it and above all, the preparedness of parents to teach and pass on their small or minority language to their children. Other basic requirements are positive or at least neutral attitudes of the speakers of the dominant languages towards the small or minority languages and their speakers, which is at the same time reflected in official attitudes and actions of the ruling administration and government of the areas. In many areas and countries, the children of small or minority language speakers are, for economic reasons, interested and required to achieve a full command of the dominant language. Their parents share that view, but unfortunately many of them take the misguided view that a knowledge of the small or minority language would constitute a hindrance to their children in successfully acquiring a full knowledge of the dominant language. This is an incorrect view, because the children would be fully bilingual in both languages provided they are taught both before the age of six years, and they would have the benefits of bilingualism (and multilingualism, if applicable) mentioned below.

Languages whose children speakers begin to learn their parents' language imperfectly or not at all, are beginning to be threatened, i.e. *potentially endangered*. When they grow into young adulthood with an imperfect, or rudimentary, or non-existent knowledge of it, their original language is said to be *endangered*. If the decay of the language continues, and the youngest speakers are part middle-age, the language is said to be *seriously endangered*. If, in the end, only a few aged speakers are left, the language is said to be *moribund* or *terminally endangered*. If there are no speakers left, the language is *extinct*.

In addition to the above-mentioned main reasons for a language to be threatened, there can be some others such as the destruction of the habitat and environment of the speakers of a small or minority language through human actions such as mining, oil exploration, deforestation, warfare, etc. These lead to the dislocation and scattering of the speakers, with dire consequences to their language. Natural causes such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, mudslides, tsunamis, etc. also play a part in endangering languages.

Coming back to the advantages of bi- and multilingualism briefly mentioned above, the following may be pointed out: natural bilinguals or multilinguals, i.e. persons who got a full knowledge of two languages before the age of six years, such as a person who acquired a complete command of a minority language and a dominant language, carry a much larger store of linguistic and related information in their heads than monolinguals. From this large memory store they are able to obtain, very quickly and smoothly, relevant grammatical and lexical information without getting confused, which sharpens their general thinking ability and their so-called applied intellect, i.e. the ability to quickly find solutions of and answers to novel problems which they had not confronted before. They also have a far better ability

than monolinguals, to acquire new knowledge, be it another language or something else worth knowing.

4. Re-invigoration, preservation and maintenance of threatened languages

What can be done to re-invigorate, preserve and maintain a language that is threatened and on the way to disappearing (Wurm, 1997, 1998, 2001)? When the speakers are in general resigned to their language disappearing eventually and being replaced by another, usually a dominant, language, there are almost always one or several persons in the community who resent such a trend, but do not know what to do about it, and how to persuade other members of the speech community to take active steps to resist this trend. The first step in trying to re-invigorate a language, be it one where most speakers are apathetic about its future, or actively interested in preserving it, but do not know how, is to identify one or several persons in the speech community of the kind mentioned who are potential leader personalities in the re-invigoration process of the language. These persons should be informed by an outside expert like a suitable linguist, of the advantages of bi- and multilingualism mentioned above, with a view to pointing out to their speech community the importance of the children and young adults (who are the first to move away from their traditional language to another, usually dominant language) maintaining or improving or re-learning as the case may be, their traditional language. Also they should be told that the speakers of their language, most of whom would under the given circumstances, know the dominant language which threatens their own, have something which the otherwise so clever mostly monolingual speakers of the dominant language do not have, i.e. a second language. Therefore, they are superior in this respect, to them. This approach has been found to contribute very much to boosting the self-respect of speakers of threatened languages in Australia, the southwestern Pacific, Indonesia, Siberia, South America, etc. These leader persons should pass on all this new information to other members of the speech community, to persuade them to be interested in the re-invigoration of their language. The leader persons should not be old, but more on the younger side, to ensure that young people listen to them, because they tend to regard the old people as 'old fools'. The next, most important move should be directed at the children improving or re-learning their traditional language. A language that has no children speakers, or is known by the children only rudimentarily, is doomed in the long run. In this, the older speakers who still have a full knowledge of the threatened language, have an important role. They should engage in traditional playing situations with the children, or in any other playing or performing situation where spoken language plays a role, using the threatened language, with explanations in another language which the children understand, such as the dominant language. The children should be encouraged to use the threatened

language, either learn words and phrases used by the elders, if they do not know it at all, or try to speak it more correctly as instructed by them, if they have a rudimentary or otherwise limited knowledge of it. Any positive response from a child should be rewarded by praise and a small gift, for instance a sweet. This method has been found to be very successful. With young adults, or teenagers who have no, or only a rudimentary or limited knowledge of the threatened language, the playing situation should be replaced by the enacting of some aspects of the traditional culture of the speakers of the threatened language, thereby also achieving revival of such cultural aspects (Wurm, 1999). Aged speakers of the language are likely to have a memory of such cultural features, such as feasts, dancing, singing, storytelling, the performing of mythological events, and also, as the case may be, of former economic activities of the speakers, e.g. hunting, fishing, gardening, market activities, etc. The aged speakers can be instructors and leading performers in such re-enactments. Again, the threatened language should be used in all these activities, with explanations in the dominant language for the young participants, as may be necessary. Again, renewed or increased ability on their part should be rewarded at least in some symbolic form such as the right to a large part of the booty in the performance of a hunt, with public praise for it. Both children and young persons should be encouraged to use the threatened language when speaking to each other, as far as they can, also with rewards for such efforts. Because of the important part which old people play in all this, the respect for them of young members of the community is likely to increase, and make them listen to them more.

At this point outside linguists come in. Their part in the re-invigoration of a language has been indirect up to this point, leaving the actual process of re-invigoration of a language to its speakers who follow their advice. However, linguists usually engage in the study of the endangered languages for scientific and museal purposes. This by itself often encourages the speakers to re-invigorate and maintain their languages, because they see that their languages, often dubbed 'useless' by the dominant language speakers, are not useless after all. The linguists should prepare materials for the speakers for enhancing their knowledge of their language, and for preserving it. It is likely that at least some members of the speech community are literate in the dominant language. Linguists can produce a practical alphabet for the threatened language (if it has not yet been reduced to writing) for the preparation of textbooks, story books, small dictionaries, etc. More comprehensive descriptions, larger dictionaries, as many texts as possible with detailed translations and voice recordings of them should be produced of the language at some stage. There is an increasing tendency among descendants of speakers of dying and dead languages to want to relearn them, and they look towards linguists to provide them with the information on their dying or former languages which they require for this purpose.

Speakers of threatened languages encouraged to re-invigorate and maintain their languages tend to voice the opinion that their languages are useless for making a living in an environment dominated economically by speakers of dominant languages. They are reinforced in this opinion by speakers of those languages who tell them the same, and point out to them that their language could not play a part in public affairs, etc. However, the latter is not the purpose of small or minority languages, but they may well have a role in cultural activities as they have in multicultural Australia, or in interpretation situations, etc. In any event, the roles of small or minority languages are quite different from those of the dominant languages which offer economic benefits and which are open to speakers of small or minority languages anyway through their proposed bilingualism. The re-invigorated, preserved and maintained small or minority languages give their speakers intellectual benefits through their bilingualism, they are a precious symbol of their ethnic identity and gives them a feeling of belonging to a special community, of which they should be proud, and last but not least, give them the advantages of a secret language not intelligible to speakers of dominant languages whom they may have reason to distrust.

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