

Language Death and Language Acquisition

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Abstract— This research paper focuses on Language Death and Language Acquisition. The research paper shows the broad definition of language death and how motivation plays an important role in acquiring the language. .

1 INTRODUCTION

The death of a language also usually occurs with the death of the language's last fluent speaker. The motivation of the younger generation to learn their native language is often mired by the lack of opportunities their native language will provide them. In exchange for learning a more widely used and regarded languages, native languages are starting to die out. The motivation of the new generation to learn a native language is a determinant of a native language's decline and subsequent death, in exchange for learning a more widely used language.

Three basic theories have been widely regarded in terms of their discussion of first language acquisition: behaviorist, innatist, and interactionist (Peregoy and Boyle 46). The behaviorist theory attributes the child as a *tabula rasa*, or a blank slate who imitates and reacts to external stimulus (Peregoy and Boyle 46). The innatist theory, on the other hand states that children have a biological Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which functions as a guide that the child tweaks regularly in order to construct their native language's grammar rules (Peregoy and Boyle 47). The interactionist theory on the other hand, acknowledges the first two theories add another factor to the acquisition process: social stimulus. This theory states that the mother and caretaker of the child also play a role in the language acquisition process (Peregoy and Boyle 48)

2 History

The death of a language occurs when the

last fluent native speaker of that language dies. This is especially true in terms of languages which have never been recorded or studied formally. The last speaker of that native language becomes a repository and an archive which when not passed down disappears along with the person. The language ceases to exist and unrecorded deaths make it seem that these languages have never existed in the first place (Crystal 2).

3 Motivation

There are various motivations regarding language acquisition which may have contributed to a native language's death. For example, in the case of two different cultures interacting with each other, one or both of them will have to adapt and learn the other's language in order for communication to ensue. Most often, a more widely used language is used as an intermediary as with the case of English in its global usage. As the native speakers of a language start to view their native language as something of a burden, they become disillusioned to their traditions and start focusing on a second language. As these disillusioned natives pass on their ideals and views of their native language to their offspring, the newer generations start to slowly condemn the use of their language. These newer generations oftentimes possess the capacity to understand but not speak the language. This process ensures a language's death as the children of these newer generations will never learn how to speak their native language from their non-

speaking parents.

4 conclusion

Language is used as a tool for communication and the moment it loses that capacity, its death slowly begins. Even though some records or archives may remain as a testament to the existence of such languages, it will remain dead so long as there are no people or groups of people who are speaking it (Crystal 1). These deaths continue to happen, as most evident in indigenous communities. As modernity is introduced to these communities, people are lulled into leaving behind their tradition in exchange for a more stable livelihood. Though these languages may be minor in its influence globally, the death of a language is something to be feared, admonished, and made aware of to a larger demographic.

References

- [1] Crystal, David. *Language death*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 2000. Print.
- [2] Peregoy, Suzanne and Owen F. Boyle. *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers*. 4th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. 2004. Print