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# EXFAC03-AAS v11 Language

□ 5: Language death  
and endangered  
languages



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## Course contents

1. Universals
2. Typology
3. Language families
4. Language contact
- 5. Language death**
6. Language variation


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## Language death and endangered languages



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### Topics

- What is language death?
- Why should we care?
- Why do languages die?
- How can we assess language vitality?
- What can be done?

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## Languages and speakers



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- Ethnologue (1999)
  - Data from 6,059 languages
- 8 languages > 100 million speakers
  - Mandarin, Spanish, English, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese
  - 2.4 billion speakers
- Top 20 languages:
  - 3.2 billion speakers
- Median antall: 6,000
  - 4% of the world's languages spoken by 96% of population
  - 96% of the world's languages spoken by 4% of population

	Number	Percent		
		%	cumul. (down)	cumul. (up)
> 100 million	8	0.1	0.1	99.9
10–99.9 million	72	1.2	1.3	99.8
1–9.9 million	239	3.9	5.2	98.6
100,000–999,999	795	13.1	18.3	94.7
10,000–99,999	1,605	26.5	44.8	81.6
1,000–9,999	1,782	29.4	74.2	55.1
100–999	1,075	17.7	91.9	25.7
10–99	302	5.0	96.9	8.0
1–9	181	3.0	99.9	3.0

- 1,500 languages < 1,000 speakers
- Nearly 500 languages < 100 speakers

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## Language shift and language death



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**Language death**

- When the last speaker of a language dies

**Language shift**

- Process by which a language community adopts another language

**Krauss (1992)**

I consider it a plausible calculation that – at the rate things are going – the coming century will see either the death or the doom of 90% of mankind's languages

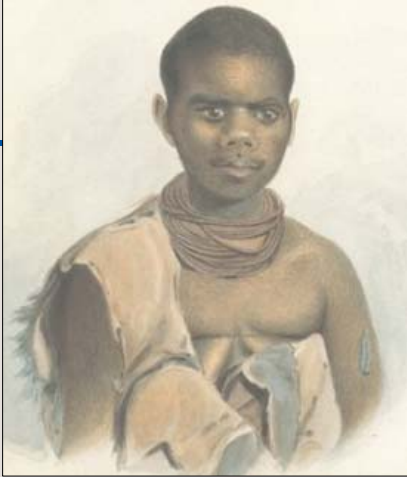
**Crystal (2000)**

- Assuming 6,000 languages and (only) 50% loss in the next 100 years
- This means 3,000 languages lost over a period of 1,200 months

To meet that time frame, at least one language must die, on average, every two weeks or so

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## Language shift scenarios



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Language shift and death

- **Cornish** (to English)
- **Manchu** (to Chinese)

Shift without death

- **Welsh** (to English)
- **Norwegian** (to English) in the US

Death without shift

- **Tasmanian** etc. – normally due to genocide

**The last Tasmanian Aborigine**  
**Trugemanner (ca. 1812–May 8, 1876)**

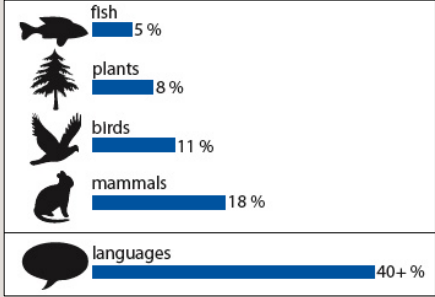
“Before she was eighteen, her mother had been killed by whalers, her first fiancé had died while saving her from abduction, and in 1828, her two sisters, Lowhenunhue and Maggerleede, had been abducted and taken to Kangaroo Island, off South Australia and sold as slaves.”  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trugemanner>

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## Why should we care?

- Because we need diversity
- Because languages express identity
- Because languages are repositories of history
- Because languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge
- Because languages are interesting in themselves



Category	Percentage
fish	5 %
plants	8 %
birds	11 %
mammals	18 %
languages	40+ %

**Loss of diversity**  
Endangered languages as compared to endangered species

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## Why do languages die?

- Factors which put people in physical danger**
  - Natural disasters leading to death or destruction of habitat
  - Disease (especially AIDS)
  - Economic exploitation
  - Political conflict leading to civil war, ethnic murder, or genocide

- Factors which change the people's culture**
  - Cultural assimilation
  - Military dominance
  - Urbanization
  - Media
  - Bilingualism



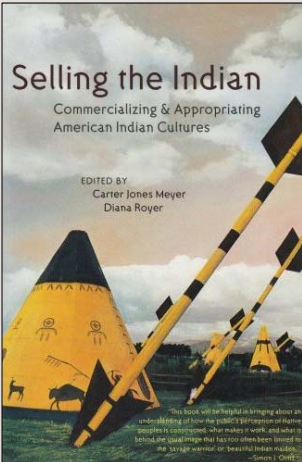
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## Stages of assimilation

- Immense pressure on people to speak dominant language
- Emerging bilingualism
  - This is the point at which the L1 can still be saved
- Younger generation shifts to L2
  - Shame at using L1
  - Leads to → self-conscious semilingualism
  - Leads to → L2 monolingualism
- One generation later
  - Discovery of what has been lost
  - Perhaps too late...



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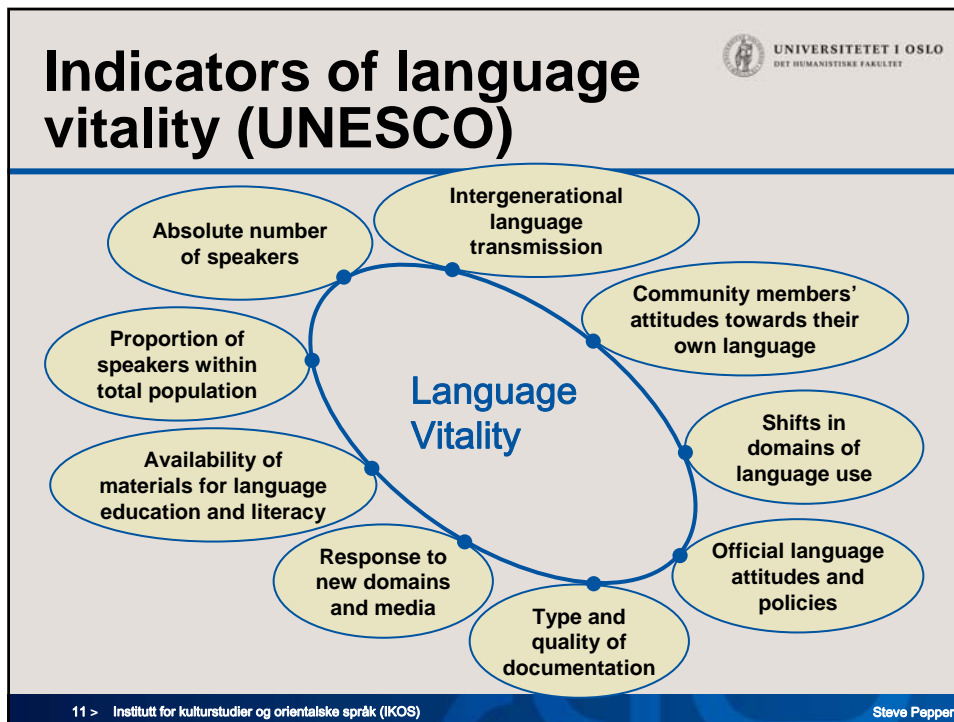
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
With the support of the Government of Norway

## Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

- Listing of 2,500 endangered and extinct languages
  - Published by UNESCO with Norwegian Government support (2010)

Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
safe	language spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission uninterrupted >> <i>not included in Atlas</i>
🔦 vulnerable	language spoken by most children, but restricted to certain domains (e.g. home)
💡 definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
💡 severely endangered	language spoken by grandparents and older generations; parent generation may understand it, but do not speak it to children or among themselves
🔦 critically endangered	youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
🔦 extinct	no speakers left >> <i>included in Atlas if presumably extinct since 1950s</i>

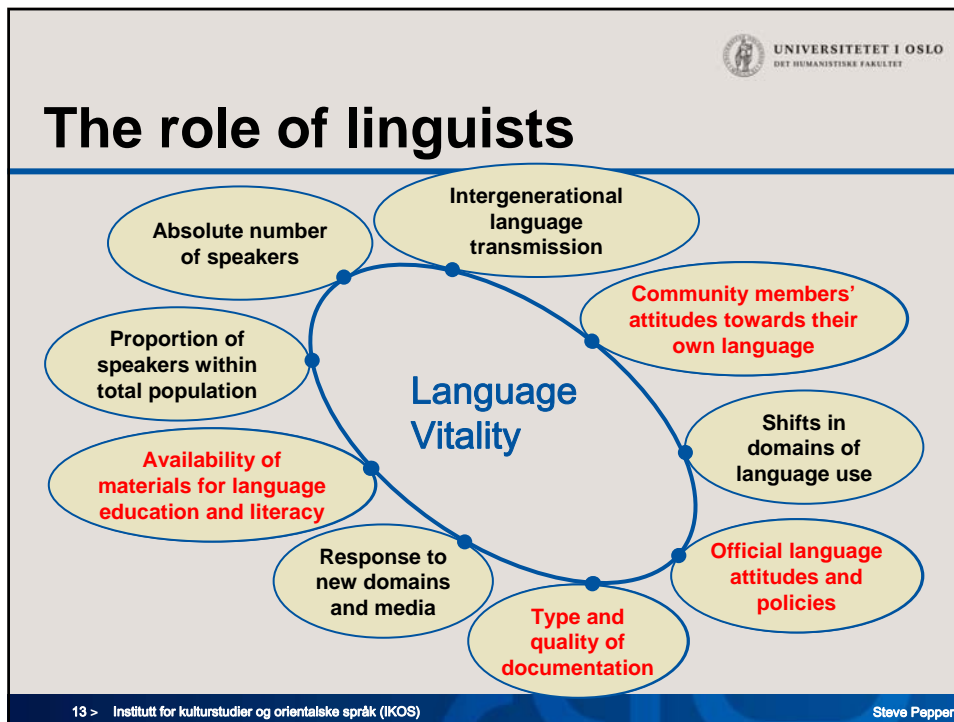
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## The solution: stable bilingualism

- Dominant language used for outward movement
- Dominated language used for inward identity (preserves pedigree)
- Stable bilingualism has two languages as complementary not competing
- Requires changes in attitudes
  - Linguists can contribute


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## Conclusion

- Linguists have a role to play
  - Describing, documenting, creating language resources
  - Need for linguistics departments to make language rescue an intrinsic part of training of students
- Time is running out
- Links
  - <http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/>
  - <http://www.livingtongues.org/>
  - <http://www.sil.org/sociolx/ndg-lg-home.html>
  - <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/>



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## Extinct and nearly extinct (1)

- ❑ [Apiaka](#) is spoken by the indigenous people of the same name who live in the northern state of Mato Grosso in Brazil. The critically endangered language belongs to the Tupi language family. As of 2007, there was one remaining speaker.
- ❑ [Bikya](#) is spoken in the North-West Region of Cameroon, in western Africa. The last record of a speaker was in 1986, meaning the language could now be extinct. This predicament resembles that of another Cameroon language, Bishuo, whose last recorded speaker was also in 1986.
- ❑ [Chana](#) is spoken in Parana, the capital of Argentina's province of Entre Rios. As of 2008, it had only one speaker.
- ❑ [Diahoi](#) (also known as Jiahui, Jahoi, Djahui, Diahkoi and Diarroi) is spoken in Brazil. Those who speak it live on the indigenous lands Diahui, Middle Madeira river, Southern Amazonas State, Municipality of Humaita. As of 2006, one speaker was left.

## Extinct and nearly extinct (2)

- ❑ [Dampal](#) is spoken in Indonesia, near Bangkir. Unesco reported that it had one speaker as of 2000.
- ❑ [Kaixana](#) is a language of Brazil. As of 2008, the sole remaining speaker was believed to be 78-year-old Raimundo Avelino, who lives in Limoeiro in the Japura municipality in the state of Amazonas.
- ❑ [Laua](#) is spoken in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. It is part of the Mailuan language group and is nearly extinct, with one speaker documented in 2000.
- ❑ [Patwin](#) is a Native American language spoken in the western United States. Descendants live outside San Francisco in Cortina and Colusa, California. There was one fluent speaker documented as of 1997.
- ❑ [Pazeh](#) is spoken by Taiwan's indigenous tribe of the same name. Pan Jin Yu, 95, was the sole known speaker as of 2008.
- ❑ [Pemono](#) is spoken in Venezuela and has one remaining speaker, who lives in an Upper Majagua village.




## Extinct and nearly extinct (3)

- ❑ [Taje](#) is one of the endangered languages spoken in Indonesia. As of 2000, there was one speaker remaining in Sulawesi.
- ❑ [Taushiro](#) (also known as Pinche, or Tausiro in Spanish) is an isolated language spoken in Peru. The speakers, who were from the Loreto Province and Tigre River basin, married non-Taushiro speakers and adopted Spanish or other languages. There was one speaker documented in 2008.
- ❑ [Tinigua](#) is a nearly extinct language from Colombia. While originally from the Yari River, most of descendants now live in the Sierra de la Macarena and do not speak the language anymore. As of 2008, the last speaker lived near the Guayabero River.
- ❑ [Tolowa](#), the language of the Tolowa Native American tribe, is spoken by a few members located in the Smith River Rancheria, a sovereign nation, near Crescent City, California. Tolowa is part of the Athabaskan language family. One speaker remained as of 2008.

## Extinct and nearly extinct (4)

- ❑ [Volow](#) (or Valuwa) is spoken on Motalava Island, a part of the Republic of Vanuatu. The Republic of Vanuatu is located near the east coast of Australia. One speaker remained as of 2008.
- ❑ [Wintu-Nomlaki](#) is spoken by the Wintu tribe in California. The language has two dialects: Nomlaki, which is spoken along the Sacramento River south of Red Bluff, and the other is Wintu. As of 2008, there was one fluent speaker and several speakers with moderate command of the language.
- ❑ [Yaghan](#) is spoken in Chile, in the community of Villa Ukika on Navarino Island, located in the Magallanes Territory. As of 2005, the last remaining speaker and pureblood member of the Yaghan tribe was an elderly woman named Cristina Calderon.
- ❑ [Yarawi](#) (or Suena) is spoken in Papua New Guinea, near Morobe town in Morobe Province. One speaker was documented in 2000.

<http://blogs.news24.com/duarte/saving-a-dying-language>



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## Next week: Language variation

Further reading on language death

- Crystal, David. 2000. *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dixon, R.M.W. 1997. *The rise and fall of languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (esp. chapters 8 & 9)
- Evans, Nicholas. 2010. *Dying words. Endangered languages and what they have to tell us*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell
- Fishman, Joshua. 1991. *Reversing language shift*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
- Fishman, Joshua. 2001. *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters
- Hagège, Claude. 2009. *On the life and death of languages*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

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## Flervalgstest og eksamen

<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flervalgstest (uke 15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obligatorisk. Fronter.</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Språkdelen og kulturdelen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 spørsmål i hver</li> <li>• 10 riktig: bestått</li> <li>• 2. forsøk uke 17</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hvert spørsmål</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice:</li> <li>• Enkle faktaspørsmål med tre svaralternativer</li> <li>• Alternativt velge hvilke av tre utsagn som er riktige</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eksamen 19. mai (4 timer)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To deler: språk og kultur</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Språkdelen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 spørsmål, alle må besvares</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eksempler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Forklar kva vi meiner med pidgin-språk og kreol-språk</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Forklar hva det innebærer at det nordindiske språket hindi tilhører samme språkfamilie som norsk, og samme språkbunt (linguistic area) som det sydindiske språket tamil</i></li> </ul>
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