

**MINORITY LANGUAGE LOSS: SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CAUSES****Erdal Ayan, M.A./M.Sc.**

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**TURKEY****ABSTRACT**

The current study is a review article surveying on the reasons behind minority languages and language losses. It hypothesizes language loss is not a simple process that could be explained by changes in societies, and/but there are serious and determining periods that triggers that unintended result such as social and linguistic causes. It goes beyond the causes like financial problems, political and ecological changes and human mobilizations within years. The study clarifies that socio-cultural and linguistic reasons may play a very important role in losing a language belonging particularly to minorities. It argues that socio-cultural tolerance as well as linguistic factors will contribute a lot more to survival of minority languages than applying strict political measurements and educational regulations.

**Keywords:** Minority languages, language loss, socio-cultural and linguistic causes.

**INTRODUCTION**

Language is a symbol of a state or nation, as well as a representation of ethnic identity, not only for majority, but also for minority communities. It provides autonomy for people who are enjoying. Therefore, people of both societies have great desires to keep their languages alive and transfer them to new generations. However, minority languages have always had too little chance to survive when compared to the high prestige of majority languages. Owing to reasons ranging from nationalist language policies, linguistic to social reasons, many could not survive (e.g. Syriac and Ubykh in Turkey and Aborigine languages in Australia).

In the twentieth century, reforms in linguistic rights resulted in multilingual policies of many countries, which had formerly nationalist language policy backgrounds. The countries started to change present policies which were threats to minority languages (See table 1 and 2), while some others are still continueing with monolingual policies like “one state, one nation, one language” (e.g. Brazil, and Turkey).<sup>1</sup> In the light of these facts, languages are still dying today. Romaine (2007), for instance, assumes that around half of the world languages have expired in the past five hundred years and also cites “as many as 60 to 90% of the world's approximately 6,900 languages may be at the risk of extinction within next 100 years” (115). In this point the most important criteria is the number of speakers, in that, as the linguistic authorities cleared, if a minority language usage falls under 70%, it will most probably die out.<sup>2</sup>

There are still ongoing disputes about which one is the most decisive factor in minority language loss. In this regard, linguists stress some external and internal factors which lead minority language loss such as “politics”, “economic forces”, “religion”, “demographic factors”, “mass media”, “social identifiers”, and “ecology, natural disasters” (Crawford,

1 For further information; see Massini-Cagliari, 2003, p.3 ff; Brzić, 2006: 348.

2 “From Mother Tongue to Meal Ticket. Why the Welsh Language, is making a comeback”, article from “*The Economist*” published 11/08/2005.

2000: 71ff; Crystal, 2000: 70ff; Florey, 2001: 121). Meanwhile political authorities have mostly attempted to solve the causes behind minority language loss by adopting new political decisions, and scholars saw the issue just from the perspective of policy. Many dwell upon just political issues as if they were main reasons and unique solutions to deaths of minority languages. Patten (2001), for instance, wrote that “Throughout (the) history, most powerful social groups have sought to impose their language on the less powerful by requiring linguistic accommodation as a condition of economic and political opportunities and advantages”<sup>(696)</sup>. Hornberger (1998) advocated that “language policy and language education can serve as vehicles for promoting the vitality, versatility and stability of [...] languages” (439).

Are they just politic or economic reasons which cause minorities to be valued and, after some time, to lose their languages? Or are language policies including language education to be permanent solutions to this problem? Some people may also argue that language policies are the main reasons for minority language loss. Some others may, on the other hand, say that they can be only way to survive them. These statements could be, to some extent, correct commands if we regard the nationalist policies which have caused and are still causing minority languages to die out and if we consider the revitalizations of Irish and Hebrew which were largely regarded to have been revived by nationalist ideologies.

In this point, people may talk about the advantages of these policies, but the policies are just overall regulations and therefore, policies may not always work. For instance, even if a minority language is totally prevented from being spoken and written, the members of this minority have used and are still using it. During the Franco regime, for example, the Basque language was prohibited just because of the fact that Basques had reacted against the dictator's regime. Basque language was denounced as “vulgar, barbarous, barbaric, uncouth, and animalistic”; however, Basques continued enjoying their language by forming “underground schools” and provided “nursery”, “child care” and “health care” for people (Fishman, 1996: 7). After Franco died, the Basque government was established in 1979, and the Basque language was standardized by the Basque government in 1982. However, the Basque government still cannot “require Basque for employment” just because of the Spanish constitution (Spolsky, 2004: 197-8).

Language policies, again, adopted in order to save minority languages, on the one hand, are mostly unilateral decisions, since they just provide the usage of language in institutions or official places such as schools or universities, not in public or in the family (e.g. Irish). Due to the reversibility of these policies, on the other hand, governments cannot guarantee the continuance of the same political attitudes to the question of death (e.g. Soviet language policies). Even further, these policies once were and are still associated with integration, assimilation, and even alienation policies (i.e. Navajos in America, Aborigines in Australia).<sup>3</sup> Apart from political reasons, there are socio-cultural and linguistic reasons which importantly affect minorities, and therefore the reasons and the struggles to keep minority languages can be seen from these socio-cultural and linguistic perspectives. In this regard, this paper will discuss the socio-cultural and linguistic reasons behind minority language loss. The first section will investigate why a language is vital for human being. The second section will outline the background of language policies in two sub-sections. The third section will survey socio-cultural and linguistic factors which deeply affected minority languages.

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3 For further information; see Crawford, 2000: 70 and Brown, 2006: 1.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Why is a Language Important?

Some people may wonder for what a language should be kept alive or why language is a *sine qua non* for a nation or culture. The first answer would be the uniqueness of a language in the world because every language is a different system of thought or “a mirror of mind” as Chomsky said (Chomsky, 1975a: 4, as cited in Smith, 1999: 7). Second one would be crucial role of language in cultural transfer or let me say the ubiquitous sense of language and culture. They cannot be considered as different facts. In this sense Fishman (1996) suggests that a language is vital for a culture, since “[when you] take [language] away from the culture, [...] you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. [...] that is you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about” (2).

In addition, a language is an important part of irreplaceable ecosystem as Nettle & Romaine (2001) identified. Linguistic diversities are not totally different from biodiversities since each has unique system in itself. When a language dies, “the acquisition, accumulation, maintenance, and transmission of knowledge” also die (Ibid: 2). For example, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were 300 hundred different names for species of fish in Palauan language, but today nobody knows about these native names.

### Language Policies: Origin and History

In terms of sociolinguistics, linguistic minority is a group of people who speak a language rather than the dominant (or majority) language of an area or country. According to *Minority Language Corpora* by Scannel (2007), there are 144 minority languages in the world.<sup>4</sup> Linguists define two kinds of minorities; “native minorities” such as Welsh in England, Kurdish in Turkey and “immigrant minorities” such as Italian, Polish, Hindi, Greek or Turkish in Germany. (In my study I will not divide them into these groups.) Linguistic minorities are found in many countries. In Britain, for example, there are over 100 such languages. Grosjean (1982) assumes that about half of the world is bilingual (in Romaine, 1995: 8). Even further, the statistics also obviously proves this fact. In Papua New Guinea, for example, there are eight hundred and twenty three languages while Indonesia has seven hundred and twenty six languages (See table 1).

It is a fact that even monolingual communities are not homogeneous; beside regional, social and stylistic varieties within the same society, there are minority communities who are enjoying different languages and cultures, as well. Romaine (1995) attests that “although monolinguals are a minority when we consider the world as a whole, they are very powerful minorities, often imposing their languages on others [...]” (6). The statement, on the one hand, explains the hierarchy between the strong and the weak, and refers, on the other hand, to the changes in *status quo* in a certain region or country in time. For example, before white man’s arrival to America, Indians were enjoying their own languages. They were not minorities and were not living in reservations as it is today. Within time, English became the dominant language in America and the others lost their prestige. Navajo, for instance, is currently one of the indigenous languages in the United States and according to the 1990

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4 See <<http://borel.slu.edu/crubadan/stadas-1.0.html>>

United States census, there are still 220,000 Navajos and much more than half are still living in reservations (Spolsky, 2004: 203).

At various periods of history of the language policies, most of the nations have regarded minorities as potential threats to the cohesion of the state. Perhaps many considered these languages as “criteria for ethnicity” for society and so many thought that any legalization would give rise to claims for special status, mother tongue teaching, land rights, and even the declaration of independence. Sometimes, these ideas turned out to be just xenophobia. There were, for instance, populations, speaking regional languages, and did not claim independence such as Flemish, Alsatian, and Lorrain in Europe. However, sometimes there also appeared exceptions such as Corsican and Occitan, which were linked to separatist ideologies.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, for some scholars these exceptions were also misconceived. According to Judge (2000), for example, in 1970s, speakers of these languages had been associated with “regionalism” not “nationalism” because, as she noted, “[for] the statements by their representatives in the French Parliament, a majority of the Corsican population wants to remain French” even in 1996 and they were searching for “a new identity rather than nationalism and independence” (67-8).

Totalitarian language policies have been seen as a way to enhance central governments. Thus, many states have attempted to ban both minorities and their languages. However, sometimes, the winning side has become linguistic minority. Danish Government, for example, had to accept the demand made by Greenlanders for a fully functional national language to run their government. The right was granted to them in 1979 under the Home Rule Act (Romaine, 1995: 21).

In this context, in next two sub-sections, some details of minority language policies and language rights will be discussed. I intentionally divided them into two sub-sections as language rights before 1945 and language rights after 1945 since there are noteworthy differences between the recognitions or political rights and its practices within these two periods.

### **The period before 1945**

National and international language policies are not new issues. After the French Revolution, the idea of stable national border emerged, and central governments raised their status on one language policy in order to save their borders. The Reformation, on the other hand, played an important role. Church caused two movements to come out; the first one was advocating to enjoy national languages, while the second one was permitting to prefer just a national language for all the others (e.g. the Act of Union of England and Wales favouring English over Welsh in 1526) (Spolsky, 2004: 113-4). The latter one was easy to apply for many countries which would like to have hegemony over the others and so this policy ruled for decades. However, this does not show that the totalitarian countries have remained blind to minority issue all the time. Varennes (1997), for instance, informed that the treaty between France and the Helvetic state gave benefits to Swiss who spoke only German in 1516, which is one of the first official language recognitions (in Spolsky, 2004: 114).

By the 19th century, the idea of linguistic diversities had not appeared. With Serbian autonomy, for example, the protection of minorities in treaties dealing with national

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5 Further information; see Judge, 2000: 59-67.

minorities was internationally recognized in the Treaty of Bucharest (1812). The recognition of Polish populations in various clauses of treaties, signed at the Congress of Vienna, was granted in 1814, as well (Ibid: 115).

Until the end of the 19th century the disputes on the protection of ethnic and linguistic minorities had gone on. After the WWI, further regulations in the rights of linguistic minorities were noted. The Treaty of Versailles (1919), for example, included provisions for linguistic rights of minorities in treaties imposed upon Austria, Hungary, Bulgarian and Ottoman Empire. According to the treaty, it was essential to provide equality for individual members of linguistic minorities including their languages. All the states agreed in principle that “all its nationals, including members of minority groups should be free to use any language in private, in business, in religion, in the press or any publications or at public meetings” (Spolsky, 2004: 116).

In the early 20th century, the international recognitions of restricted language rights for minority population emerged in the legislations and constitutions of nation states. In Lenin's period, the Soviet Union, for instance, was the only state which made its own language policy for minorities. Soviet language policy was designed to teach “literacy” and “socialism” in a practical way (Spolsky, 2004: 116). Primary schools, for example, were established and there was a considerable support for the language rights of minorities. However, after the “collectivization of agriculture” in the 1930s and the grain crisis in December, 1932, Stalin was angry with the opposition to collectivization in the Ukraine. As a result, some important changes were noted in Soviet language policies. Ethnic Soviet villages, for instance, were abolished, teaching in Russian was imposed in schools, and the number of ethnic units in the army was diminished (Ibid: 117).

Apart from the Soviet's language policies, Greece had also noted similar initial attempts to legalise minority language rights in almost the same period but could not apply them. After the Treaty of Neuilly (1919), Greece agreed to regard the rights of national minorities within its borders and according to Treaty of Serves (1920- never implemented) Greece guaranteed to found schools for minority language-speaking students. In the beginning, Greek government published some “school primers” written in Slavonic and showed it was applying the rules of treaties; however, the tolerating atmosphere of 1920s turned into a chaos with the dictatorial administration of Metaxas in 1930s (Trudgill, 2000: 257). The education in Slavonic languages was banned and Slavonic-speakers were punished and arrested just because of enjoying their languages. Minorities were forced to learn Greek by attending “night school” programmes and even further, Slavonic names were changed into Greek (Ibid). Meanwhile, some other countries developed constitutional protections for minority languages between the two World Wars. Finland, for example, improved the status of Finnish but it continued to protect Swedish, and Ireland, on the other hand, revitalized Irish against English hegemony (Ibid).

### **The period after 1945**

Spolsky (2004) illustrated that the issue of language rights after the WWII was largely focused on individual rights rather than on the collective rights of linguistic minorities (118). In 1945 The United Nations Charter, for instance, accepted respect for “human rights and fundamental freedoms”, “equality”, and “absence of discrimination”; however, just in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights included language (Ibid). In 1957, International Labour Organization Convention No. 107, guaranteeing the protection of indigenous and

other tribal populations, provided the education of their children in their mother tongue. Furthermore, the 1960 UNESCO (United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) Convention permitted for “the establishment of voluntarily separate educational systems” in order to stop discrimination in education and offered “education in accordance with the wishes of the pupils’ parents” (as cited in Spolsky, 2004: 118). This ensured the use of their languages, as long as it did not prevent minorities from learning the culture and language of the majority communities.

The term linguistic rights appeared in the late 1970s and linguistic human rights in 1990s. International Labour Organization Convention no 169 regulated the rights of indigenous people in 1989. In 1990, United Nation’s adoption of an International Convention on the Protection of Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families covered language rights, as well. However, in 1993, a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was not passed because it was about “the right to establish and control institutions” for education in the minority languages and it was argued that it might be used for “self determination and land rights” (Ibid: 119).

In 1994, the United Nations Human Rights Committee adjusted article 27 adopted by UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966. This article was necessitating recognition of the groups by the government in order for minorities to benefit from all language rights. Actually, the new adjustment took the authority away from the governments to take temporary decisions in case of new legislations about minority language rights. However, some cases showed that the same conditions did not considerably change even in today. In this context, Sweden, for example, signed European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2000 and declared that she officially recognized three regional or minority languages, such as Sami, Meänkieli (Tomedal Finnish) and Finnish. According to *Ethnologue*, the number of the speakers of these communities are approximately 6000, 60-80,000 and 200,000 per each. Spolsky (2004) pointed out that Scanian (or Skanian), having around 1.5 million speakers and also listed in *Ethnologue*, was not recognized (123). In 1995, a Scanian ethnic organization demanded to be recognized in the European list of minority languages, but Swedish government committee claimed that their variety was just a dialect and therefore, they were left out

Today minority language right is regarded as human right. Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (1996), wrote that “all languages are collectively constituted and are made available within a community for individual use as tools of cohesion, identification, communication, and creative expression”.<sup>6</sup> Why? According to Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (1996), this is officially because “all languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions” (6). Nonetheless, there are still restrictions on minority language use (e.g. England's different policies on Welsh, Scottish, Gaelic, Irish, and Scots and Ulster Scots) (Spolsky, 2004: 124).

In light of these facts, some revitalization schools, applying strategies (e.g. Immersion Models) to save or further indigenous languages, were founded. In Hawaiian immersion school, for instance, Hawaiian was taught as the second language to English-speaking young children and “Mohawk language, culture and history” were combined in the Kahnawake

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6 Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights, 1996, Article 7, Item 2, p.6.

Survival School (Romaine, 2007: 124). Furthermore, Master-Apprentice programmes were used in California and North America. However, it is still an ongoing question to what extent these programmes and strategies are effective in revitalization. It is obvious that such activities are rare chance for some indigenous languages in terms of documentation and teaching cultures for the survival of indigenous languages but it is another fact that all these facilities provide just temporary and shallow processes, and do not guarantee the continuance of language use in the future. Romaine (2007) cleared the exact reason behind this dilemma by describing the difference between “learning a language in the artificial environment of the classroom and transmitting it in the natural environment of the home” (Ibid). She gave the example of the Irish language in Ireland; Irish children were educated in formal schools but were not given opportunity to practise in normal life environments.

To sum two sections up, minority language right issues are not recent cases; until the end of the 19th century minority language rights mostly appeared in treaties such as the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) and the Treaty of Versailles (1919). In the early 20th century, it turned into domestic or international policies of the world countries and the language rights were adopted into national constitutions. After the WWII, it was regulated by international organizations such as UNESCO, United Nation and International Labour Organization. One can also realize the difference between the theory and practice of language policies; even though the first legislations for minority language rights appeared in constitutions of nation states largely before 1945, the protection of minority language rights and legal implementations were essentially provided after 1945 by means of both international organizations and national states (See table 2).

In spite of all these noted regulations, and indigenous political decisions to keep them alive in previous years, minority languages have died and are still dying. Romaine (2007) informs that there are just two fluent Warrwa speakers, spoken in West Kimberley of Western Australia and a dozen of elderly people can speak Ura today (2). Even further, Marie Smith is the last person, enjoying Eyak, spoken in Alaska and Tefvik Esevenç, dying in Turkey in 1992, was assumed to be the last speaker of Ubykh language used in the north-western Caucasus (Ibid).

Despite these facts, some authorities still stand for language policies or the implementations of political approaches. Nancy Hornberger (1998), for instance, claims that the Puna Bilingual Education Project and the official recognition of Quechua in Peru in 1975, served “approximately 4% of the school-aged Quechua and Aymara-speaking population” and provided a model for other Latin American countries (443); however, the percentage of Quechua language speakers in Peru decreased from 31 per cent in 1940 to 11 per cent in 1982 (Spolsky, 2004: 210), and according to *Ethnologue* there are less than 450,000 Aymara-speakers living in Peru today.<sup>7</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

In this study both qualitative and quantitative research methodology was employed. The statistics by *Ethnologue* and *The Economist* were used as the basic resources. Moreover, specific political changes in the rules, governmental decisions and educational steps to recover lost languages as well as particular cases that the minority languages such as Irish,

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7 Further information; see <<http://www.ethnologue.com/>>

Welsh and Hebrew experienced were evaluated from a critical perspectives. In accordance with its methodology, the current study focuses on the literature, special samples and resources providing both data types. The data was critically evaluated and compared to real life examples, and analysis was presented in following results and discussions parts of the paper. Mainly, the paper represents both a historical perspective shedding light on turning points in the policies and specific samples from different languages and societies.

## RESULTS and IMPLICATIONS

### What are the Exact Reasons?

Providing political recognitions and making language policies are not the wrong steps to start but it is obvious that policies are like umbrellas and sometimes an umbrella may not be enough for two people and one of them will probably get wet. For example, according to an article from *The Economist*, a weekly, Welsh language has been coming back in recent years. Weekly reported that a remarkable average was noted between 1991 and 2001 and it rose from 19% to 21%. In Gwynedd, 70% of people can enjoy Welsh. The reasons behind this achievement especially in central counties were actually cited as “bilingual services” provided by “public services” since 1993, “Welsh schooling” since 1960s and “job markets” demanding language proficiency (See table 3 and 4). On the other hand, weekly informed that Welsh was dying in the “heartlands” since Welsh-speaking population started to be “diluted” by immigrants from England in the northern and western counties, where they are regarded as the mostly dense Welsh-speakers. In this sense, in the rural areas the density decreased from 87 to 58 in the 1990s while English-speaking has increased.<sup>8</sup>

All these showed that the relations between the reasons of language loss and revitalisations of that language could not be explained only by political or economic approaches. The linguistic authorities found out some other causes. In their study *Vanishing Voices*, Nettle and Romaine (2000), for example, described three types of language loss; “population loss”, “forced shift” and “voluntary shift”, and divide “voluntary shift” into two; so called “from the top down” and “from the bottom up” (90-7). For the top down death, they exemplified that the reasons or cases in which the language was banned or shifted from “official institutions and public domains like the courts, the church, and perhaps the worlds of commerce and politics” (91). This description seems, more or less, appropriate for the languages which had, at least once, got their prestige, autonomy or independence and then lost all hegemonies in a region or country. Breton in France and Gaelic in Scotland, for instance, had once an important role in government and religion. However, there are many languages which have never/ not still been officially recognized by sovereign states such as many immigrant minority languages over the entire world. For the bottom up death, they claimed that the cases which language disappeared from “everyday use” but survived just in “ceremonial or more formal use” like schools (90-3). This description does not also give overall perspective for minority language loss since many minority societies have never had schools to teach under state-run schools and nor had different religions from majorities such as Kurdish in Turkey. It is clear that both definitions are away from laying the exact reasons; namely, social and linguistic reasons. If society and language are two ubiquities, there are social and linguistic based reasons behind language losses. The point on which I actually want to stress is the differences between socio-cultural and linguistic factors in minority language death. In this context, the following sections will discuss the socio-cultural and linguistic reasons behind minority language loss

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8 In “From Mother Tongue to Meal Ticket. Why the Welsh Language, is making a comeback”, article from “*The Economist*” published 11/08/2005.



in terms of religion based nationality versus immigrations and socio-cultural prejudices (as socio-cultural reasons), and discontinuities in minority language, and language prejudice (as linguistic reasons).

## DISCUSSIONS

### a) Social Reasons for Minority Language Loss

Religion based nationalist policies are closely related to political perspectives which caused minorities to die. For instance, such kind of policies caused Greek and Turkish minorities to lose their languages. Contrarily, these movements also, when considering their effects on languages, played important roles in minority language revitalizations (e.g. Irish and Hebrew) In this context, my first point is revitalizations of Irish and Hebrew which have been two significant examples so far. My second point is cultural prejudices against minorities as a result of nationalist attitudes.

### Revitalizations of Irish and Hebrew: Two sides of Nationalism

In 1913, Greek-speaking Turkish minority had considerably big proportion in Greece but after resettlement during the period between 1913 and 1923 many immigrated to Turkey, Lebanon and Syria, and in return, many Turkish-speaking Greeks immigrated to Greece (Trudgill, 2002: 132). After the Treaty of Lausanne, around 1, 100,000 Greeks and 380,000 Muslims were exchanged but Greeks living in Istanbul and Turks in western Thrace were excluded. According to Trudgill (2000), the criteria which made them Greek or Turkish was their religion and origin, not their language during that time (244). This is certainly correct; if the authorities had taken language as a base for nationality or ethnicity, they could not have distinguished them. Interestingly, in Lausanne Treatment, signed in 1923, it is written that “The Protocol on Exchange of Turk and Greek Populations” as the title of VI. Convention (Lausanne Treaty, 1923: 205).<sup>9</sup> The title obviously showed that they used religion and origin as a criterion for nationality. They tried to find nationalistic kinships since pan-Islamic policies of Ottoman Empire had been replaced by Turkish government with nation-state policies after republican revolution. This religion based nationalism created Greek-speaking minorities in Turkey and Turkish-speaking in Greece but after some time both minorities were integrated into majorities and lost their languages.

However, nationalism played different roles in Irish and Hebrew cases. Irish and Hebrew are two important languages which were revitalized in 19th and 20th centuries and are two of the most cited languages in sociolinguistic literature. Both were dominantly revitalized thanks to nationalist ideas when they were on the verge of disappear. However, they have some differences in terms of how they were revitalized and their current conditions; because, Irish is still a minority language even though it is currently official language of both Ireland and European Union. Hebrew, in contrast, has considerably progressed into a real national language and started to threaten other languages in that area.

Actually, Irish revitalization started in the 1920s, just after independence of Ireland from England and it was a reaction to English hegemony in the island. Irish people noted remarkable improvements in enjoying language because they were conscious of their identity any more thanks to institutionally and constitutionally recognition of language. However, in

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<sup>9</sup> English is my own translation. Original French version: “L'échance Des Populations Grecques et Turques et Protocole”

1973 when Ireland joined in European Union the Irish language policy changed and Ireland declined Irish usage in public. Today, it is estimated that just 13% of Irish society is native speaker of Irish language and less than half can speak it fluently.<sup>10</sup> According to Ó Riagáin (1997), the reason behind this failure is closely related to “social and economic planning”; in that, the immigrations from Ireland to the United States and other English-speaking countries because of economical problems were turned into remigration to Ireland after the developments in economy (as cited in Spolsky, 2004: 190). Irish language policy was not ready to such kind of a turn back and so English speakers were taught Irish in central territories; but, people in rural areas were not supported. Many people, speaking English came back to these lands. Ireland lost control of this influx of migration and in the end the Irish language was undermined by English.

As a matter of fact, the immigration was not the mere reason for this failure; it was, basically, the result of several reasons which dated back to some important events in Irish history. First of all, before these immigrations, there happened a “Great Famine” (it is also known Potato Famine) in Ireland in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and caused one million deaths in just four years. The famine deeply affected Irish-speaking rural areas and Irish declined in this period. There was English-speaking population in Northern Ireland and it had a potentially high rate (Crystal, 2000: 71). Secondly, the Plantations, which were largely founded in Northern Ireland by English government during English industrialization period in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, were dominantly populated by English-speaking Protestants immigrated from Great Britain. According to Barbour (2000), English government encouraged English-speaking Protestants against the dominance of Irish-speaking Catholics and besides Irish nationalist movement focused mostly on “social and political progress” rather than the Irish language (35-6). Additionally, the relations between Ireland and the U.S.A in especially on economic investments to Ireland during the period of 1980s and 1990s have crucial effect on today's condition of Irish language since Ireland is one of the few European countries accepting English as an official language.<sup>11</sup> Actually, the exact reason was the combination of many factors as Fishman concluded:

An unparalleled combination of culturally, economically, politically and demographically dislocating factors (occupation, warfare, transfer of populations, the establishment of dominant English-speaking class in towns and urban areas which later developed into all English cities, repeated famines, [...] legal prohibitions against Irish, significant periods of de facto abandonment by most major Church authorities, the rise of Anglo-Irish culture [...] and ongoing emigration to English-dominant countries [...]) have all contributed to an early, continual and still ongoing erosion of Irish in spite of the various substantial efforts (Fishman, 1991: 122-3, as cited in Spolsky, 2004: 190-1).

Revitalization of Hebrew was fairly different from Irish in terms of theory and practice. Hebrew appeared as a “revitalized, re-vernacularized, re-standardized, secularized and modernized language”. Revitalization of Hebrew in Palestine started in 1890s, but before that, in his study *What Do You Lose When You Lose Your Language?*, Joshua Fishman noted (1996), Hebrew had not been used for two thousand years and so there were no native speakers in Hebrew and it was just spoken by Jewish society (7). Interestingly, there was an

10 Further information; see <[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=GLI](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=GLI)>. It is written as 5% in this article; “How more official languages could eventually mean less diversity” by *The Economist*.

11 For further information; see Finnegan, 2002: 95ff.

advanced literacy in Hebrew and it was mostly used for religious purposes. Initially, children of Jewish settlers were educated in Hebrew language. Their parents would not speak Hebrew so they were taught by Jewish teachers who were minority in number but could speak Hebrew. These children did not live with their parents but lived in “kibbutz”, small farmhouses, with these teachers. The basic vocabularies, which were enjoyed in “kindergarten” or “carpentry”, were slowly taught to these children from the beginning where “the mother tongue begins” (Fishman, 1996: 7). In 1906 the founding of Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, reasonably affected education system and provided spread of Hebrew language over all territory. Then, the political campaigns were held to establish Hebrew as an official language in England which entered Jerusalem in 1918. During this period, Hebrew was under English mandate but after official establishment of Israel state, government took English away from its official status and Hebrew became the official language of the state. Israel educated new comers by providing “full-time Hebrew programs” and therefore, immigrants were integrated in a short time. Just fifty years later Hebrew was a language of “sport, physics, and politics”, which means national language (Spolsky, 2004: 191-4). They created a natural environment for Hebrew speech community in Israel. This proved that Hebrew was largely accepted by society. This revitalization caused, however, an endangerment of Arabic in this territory within time as Spolsky indicated (Ibid).

### Socio-cultural tolerance

The reasons which make one language more dominant may change within the nations and societies. The dominant language, for example, has more speakers, more prestigious history, or has been given an influential role by the government (Grosjean, 1982, as cited in Romaine, 1995:9; Crystal, 1992: 217-51). However all these dominances do not legalise the hegemony of one group on another. If these start to be exaggerated by dominant society, the polarisations appear among the communities. These polarisations occasion assimilations, integrations and even killings. In 1993, for example 14 members of Ticuna tribe were killed in Amazonas and in 14 others who are the members of Yanomami village were killed in Brazil/Venezuelan border in 1993 (Crystal, 2000: 75). This uneasiness between societies may not always be as cruel as this example but it may cause monolingual nationalist societies to come out in the end.

Andrew Gonzalez, an educator and linguist, said that “Monolingualism occur[ed] only if the person lives isolated in the mountains or in remote islands without access to mass media or any kind of schooling” (as cited in Galliot, 2007: 1). However, monolingualism may also be seen in metropolitans of countries if there is not a cultural tolerance to the people who enjoy another language there as Wurm (1998) has written before.<sup>12</sup> Firstly, they may totally shift to majority’s language and they may also completely forget their own language within time. Secondly, they may maintain to isolate themselves in suburban areas and do not use majority language, of course for a short time, and then most probably give up their own language.<sup>13</sup> What is the reason for these conditions? One can also formulate some other reasons but the primary criterion is clearly socio-cultural prejudices.

Socio-cultural prejudice can be defined as the intolerability of dominant group against another group. Socio-cultural prejudices may emerge as a result of “cultural

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12 In “Language Acquisition is a Matter of Exposure”, article by Lorena Galliot, published April 26, 2007, in IHT News, (<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/26/news/alang.php>)

13 For further information; see Crystal, 2000: 80.

misunderstandings” and turn into social pressures or restrictions against the minority. In her study, *Linguistics and Inter-cultural Communication*, Ingrid Piller (2007) described “linguistic misunderstanding” and “cultural misunderstanding” (218). She, actually, differentiated between the cultural and linguistic misunderstandings (I will touch on this in the following part of the paper) by indirectly defining cultural misunderstanding over language and linguistic misunderstanding over cultural or ethnic diversities. Piller cited some comments from a “mail-order bride websites” in order to exemplify the cultural prejudices:

Why choose a Filipina? Women from the Philippines are noted for their beauty, grace, charm, and loyalty. With their sweet nature and shy smiles, Filipina ladies posses an inner beauty that most men find irresistible. Filipina women are by their nature family-oriented, resourceful and devoted. What's more, English is one of the official languages of the Philippines, so communication is straight forward, and as the majority of Filipina ladies are Christian, cultural compatibility is easier than some other Asian countries” (Ibid: 219)

Evidently, language and cultural appropriateness are chief reasons for the cited man above while preferring a woman. Actually, for many people these criteria are similar even to make friends. Why? Perhaps this is because of that individuals tend to look for people around themselves, whom they will easily understand and, most importantly, tolerate their language choice. In contrary, cases in which a foreign language or culture is present many will not be willing to tolerate other people to save their cultures and languages. In these cases socio-cultural prejudices will occur against one community and its language will face to death as a result.

What would be the role of the state in keeping a language alive without being exposed to socio-cultural prejudices then? John Trim remarked (2002) that:

The maintenance of a language by its speakers is a much a duty of the speakers as their right. While I may expect the state to oblige me to carry out my religious duties or to continue to speak the language I happened to learn from my parents. Making it possible to speak a language of the choice is a reasonable expectation of a state that respects civil and human rights. But so far, it is generally accepted that the responsibility to speak and so maintain the language falls on the individual speaker (and the collective speakers), not the state (as cited in Spolsky, 2004: 130).

The state may not be responsible for this task; that is, indigenou people cannot be forced to keep their languages by means of state orders, but to provide an appropriate cultural environment or a speech community to these speakers is very crucial. In this sense, there appears two sided responsibility; minority is responsible for using its language in public and state, and the majority is responsible for not to stop this process. Perhaps this can be achieved by raising multicultural or multilingual approaches (e.g. diminishing prejudices and promoting socio-cultural tolerance).

Multilingualism can be described as a policy which guarantees the minority rights. Tebble (2006) noted that “Multiculturalism is needed to ensure that minority groups are included in decisions that affect them and are not left on the margins of society [and] language differences ought to be no bar to democratic participation” (472). According to Liebkind's description (1999),

“When a strong form of multilingualism ideology is predominant in a society, secure majorities not only tolerate minority languages, but also respect language rights of minority language speakers and support minority-language development. At the same time secure minorities enjoy their language rights and experience their language and culture as being valued by majorities” (as cited in Jeon, 2003: 133).

Despite its efficiency on creating tolerance between societies, it is still a question whether multicultural strategies will bring permanent solutions. According to Goodin (2006) “multiculturalism [...] is the sort that emphasizes protecting the rights of minority cultures” and “provides grounds for tolerating diversity-acknowledging it, respecting it, protecting it but hardly *celebrating* it” (294-5).<sup>14</sup> Actually, Goodin identified a correct case; even if majority accepts minority cultures, people will always approach suspiciously to these cultures. The suspicion, in the long run, may turn into an assimilation, integration and even alienation policy within years. Immigrants, for instance, would be asked “to accept current political structures and to engage in dialogue with the host community so that a new identity can be forged”. Nationalism may take a crucial role in this sense; that is, “for [...] nationalist to admit immigrants who do not already share or are deemed incapable of sharing the national identity would be to undermine its authority and the non-political conditions of justice proactive with respect to the substance of minority cultures” (Tebble, 2006: 468-9).

In history there are examples for such cultural prejudices. Interestingly, some were created by official institutions which were founded in the name of surviving indigenous people. The Aborigines Protection Board (also called the Protection Board), for instance, was founded in 1883. The purpose of the system was to assimilate Aborigines in the new “White society”, so Aboriginal children were removed from their families and taught in “mission stations” such as “training homes” and some “other educational institutions” in Australia (Brown, 2006: 1). At these places Aboriginal girls and boys were trained for different aims; girls were educated “as domestic servants”, while boys were disciplined as “rural workers”. The children were banned from using their languages and even seeing their families. As a result, *inter-generational mother tongue transmission*<sup>15</sup> failed and many lost their language which they acquired via their families. Even further, a kind of cultural prejudice was created via these protection strategies. Sally Morgen, for instance, a person who closely experienced such conditions before, says that “the children were taught to be ashamed of their Aboriginality and pretended all their lives that they were White. Some never knew they were Aboriginal”. In the 1980s Regional Aboriginal Language Centres were established for the aim of saving Aboriginal languages by mainly providing “documentation”, “education”, and “training” but it was not noted a remarkable “language service” for these people until the 1990s (Brown, 2006: 1). Today merely 50 languages are spoken in Australia. Just 18 of them have “at least 500 speakers” and there remained 25,000 speakers in total (Romaine, 2007: 121). According to Romaine (2007), the reasons behind that are “No Aboriginal language is used in all spheres of everyday life by members of a sizeable community” and intergenerational mother tongue transmission (Ibid). However, it is obvious that socio-cultural prejudice, created in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, played an important part in current condition in Australia.

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14 Italic is mine.

15 In Fishman (1996), “Maintaining Languages. What Works? What Doesn't?”

## b) Linguistic Reasons Behind Minority Language Loss

There are different linguistic factors which cause minority languages to die. First of all, minority language acquisition has enormously decisive role in continuance of language. Language acquisition is a process; children are exposed to “input” in the very first days and then they attempt to produce the similar sounds which are uttered by their parents. When they make a mistake, they are corrected by parents until they succeed in imitating almost all sounds correctly in the following stages. If this process is ceased or interrupted, mother tongue transmission will not be completed successfully. In this case, internal and external factors such as family and environment bring about different conditions in minority languages.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, the internal subgroups of the same minority may use dialects of the same language and this creates different usages of the same language; discontinuous of that language, in other words. These discontinuities are also closely related to “language contacts” and “language transfers” which were largely proved factors behind minority language loss by linguistic authorities (Gardner & Chloros, 2001: 132; Wolfram, 2007: 80). These show two important disadvantages then; this, on the one hand, means that the language speakers have much more than one “speech community” (Crystal, 1992: 363) and on the other hand, indicates that they lack of a standardized speech. As a result of these facts, minority language may face to changes among the groups of the same language, it may appear namely as “morpho-syntactic”, “morphological”, “lexical” and “phonological” discontinuities (Mougeon & Nadasdi, 1998: 40).

Beyond these factors, more importantly, the restrictions or pressures of “speech community” also influence the survival of minority language. There are pressures coming from “political, [...] and economic sources” as Crystal noted (2000: 78) but “linguistic prejudices” or pressures are obviously much more determining factors. This is because of that a human being is born in a community, starts to talk to the same community, grows most probably in the same one and makes friends with others, and all these automatically affect people's languages in the end. For many of us our family, relatives, friends, and even neighbours have intangible qualities, when compared to policy and economy. These factors are mostly primary linguistic interaction fields for people, in that, “ecology of language” “refer[ring] to the social environments and domains in which language is used” and it is irreplaceable (Romaine, 2007: 127).

### **Mother tongue transmission and the role of family**

In majority populations the acquisition of language mostly follows its standard continuum; availability of enough input, confining to family, schooling in the same language, practising language at home, interactions with other members of the same speech community, working in the same language, etc. Minority language acquisition follows the same way to a certain time if minority children get enough input and keep practising language to express themselves in their own languages; however, second or foreign language (majority language) is always dominant factor as a result of external reasons; schooling systems in majority languages, interactions at working places and speech community of majority language. All these demise vernacular language usage in normal life and increase second language usage by nature. Therefore, minority children become potential bilinguals since, after a certain period,

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16 Further information; see Brizić, 2006: 341ff.

minority children need to use both languages, and “code-switching” between languages takes place in sentence levels:

*Kodomotachi liked it.* (Japanese/English bilingual)

“The children liked it.” (Recorded by Nishimura 1986, as cited in Romaine, 1995: 2).

*Have agua, please.* (Spanish/English bilingual)

“Have water, please.” (Recorded by Kessler 1984, as cited in Romaine, 1995: 2).

Parent’s attitude to transmission of language is an internal factor. Families may not be willing to teach their languages to their children. In one of his reportage a short time before dying, Tefvik Esenç,<sup>17</sup> for example, answered that “No. We thought that it would be shame to other people if we spoke another language [Ubykh]”<sup>18</sup>, when, Zeynep Attikkan (2004), a reporter of newspaper, asked whether he had taught Ubykh to his children. In contrast, this attitude changes within different societies. In her study on Turkish and Yugoslavian minorities living in Austria, Brizić (2006), for instance, proved that Turkish and former Yugoslavian families had different transmission behaviours to teach their languages to the children; in that, Turkish parents are much more liable to shift their languages when compared to former Yugoslavian families (351).<sup>19</sup>

### Discontinuities in minority languages and linguistic prejudices

It is natural that there are different dialects in the same minority language. This has a crucial function in terms of *linguistic diversity*. They refer, however, natural disadvantages if we accept that the factor of the number of population is primarily determining factor in maintenance of language and its status in a society. Alune language, spoken in Central Maluku, for instance, has been identified with its three different dialects; “north, central, and south” (Florey, 2001: 114). These three dialects are distinguishable by their phonology and lexical differences. Florey (2001) informed that the north dialect was enjoyed in nineteen villages; central dialect in six villages, while south dialect was used just in Kairantu, but nowadays it is thought to be nearly extinct (Ibid).

As a result of language contacts, language transfers from the majority societies may result in discontinuities, “stabilization”, “fossilization” or “integration” in phonological level (Wolfram, 2007: 80). In Cajun English, spoken by the descendants Acadian French in Louisiana in the United States, for example, there are phonological transfers from French, such as “the stopping of inter-dental fricatives, as in *tink* for *think* or *dough* for *though*, and the use of heavy nasalization (a nasalized vowel instead of vowel plus nasal segment) in words like *man* and *pin*, are being recycled and intensified in the dialect of English” (Ibid).

Furthermore, some other sociolinguistic studies showed that “the order of linguistic constraints [was] not constant [...] and constitute[d] clear cases of discontinuities within speech community. Kay (1978) and Kay & McDaniel (1979), for example, found out that “the New York City speech community speakers of Jewish extraction raise[d] front vowels

17 [sic] The man’s name is misspelt as “Tefvik Esenc” by Nettle and Romaine (2000: 3) and Romaine (2007: 116), my usage is correct here.

18 My own translation.

19 This condition is called “linguistic suicide” in linguistic literature.

more often than back vowels whereas those of Italian extraction exhibit raise[d] these sounds more frequent with back vowels”.<sup>20</sup>

These linguistic factors firstly charge the availability of input acquisition and then affect the vital role of *intergenerational mother tongue transmission*, and thirdly remove a natural language learning environment or *speech community*, as linguistic authorities largely put stress on (e.g. Fishman, 1996; Beck and Lam, 2006; Romaine, 2007). However, more importantly another factor does actually appear above all these reasons and it closely relates not only to the minority but also the majority. In this point, linguistic prejudices have also a crucial part in minority language loss since it is highly possible for a minority individuals to acquire their own language more or less and to enjoy it to a certain time but to keep it for a longer time and teach it to their next generations are the other sides of this process. If I am right, they will probably use and teach that language if they find an appropriate speech environment and do not get a negative impression and feedback from other people. Brizić (2006) suggested that “a positive attitude [...] towards the societies of the country of [immigrant or native minorities] turned out to provide a solid basis for educational and linguistic success in the immigration context, as they usually go hand in hand with high linguistic self-confidence in the L2 and a good command of both languages” (345). This requires a natural environment not an artificial one as a Gaelic-speaking man said:

I speak the Gaelic here with my parents and when I go up to the [hotel, bar], but I speak it not because I have to but because this is what we speak. I like the Gaelic. But if it is going to become something artificial, then well, I won't feel like speaking it at all. I don't want Gaelic to be kept alive by making it artificial... For myself, I'd prefer if it died (MacDonald 1997:218, as cited in Romaine, 2007: 125.).

If this atmosphere cannot be provided, it is unavoidable that linguistically prejudiced reactions will automatically occur. Well, how can these reactions be observed within society? In this sense, Roberts et al. (2005) wrote that:

Twenty per cent of *all* the consultations we filmed contained misunderstandings caused by language/cultural differences, where talk itself is the problem. These misunderstandings related to issues of language and self-presentation rather than culturally-specific health beliefs. This challenges the literature on culture and ethnicity which exoticises patients from linguistic minorities (Roberts et al. 2005: 473, as cited in Piller, 2007: 218).

As one can see linguistic prejudices are mostly reasoned by linguistic misunderstandings. This mutually challenges both minorities and majorities. For example, varieties of Brazilian Portuguese used by people from poorer sectors were directly linked to “cognitive poverty” and “mental deficits” by majorities. In this context Massini-Cagliari (2003) reported that “those who do not speak correctly, do not think properly [...] because judgements on language extend to those who speak it, speakers of non-standard varieties are automatically considered non-capable workers and, consequently, non capable individuals” (17-8).

In the long term such attitudes may hold places in people's minds and turn into a common

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20 This also demonstrated that Labov's “principle of uniformity of variation”, claiming the speakers of the same “speech community” will tend to use the same variations, is not current among minority societies, as Mougeon & Nadasdi (1998: 41-2) cited.



behaviour against other's language. This attitude interestingly might appear among speakers of the same minority language. Example is from Ireland; according to a report from *BBC News*, Manchan Magan (2006), a television presenter, travelled to Ireland in order to observe whether Irish language is being spoken by, as claimed, 1.6 million people. During the trip, he enjoyed Irish language and attempted to interact with other people. He experienced tragic events; for instance, he was "kicked out of bars", "served the wrong food", and "given the wrong directions". Furthermore, a shopkeeper told him to speak in English otherwise to leave from the shop in Dublin. He said "In some ways if you are speaking Irish some people will think it's a weapon of war, or they will think you're just showing off". When he came to Belfast, he thought that he would feel little bit free to use Irish but he saw that the conditions were similar to the other areas he had visited. At the end of his trip, he wrote that "[...] a few people talked to me in English saying that it was a sweet enough language as long as it wasn't shoved down their throats. But then if I was warned eventually that if I did insist on speaking Irish on the Shankill that I was liable to end up in hospital very soon".<sup>21</sup>

Even further the linguistic prejudices may turn into individual or institutional policies against minority language even if political recognitions are granted by the government. The event noted in Scotland proved this idea. Scotland has 60.000 Welsh speakers who have been using Welsh for one thousand and five hundred years. According to a report from *BBC News*, the Boyle family wanted to give a Gaelic name to their child but they were not allowed by the General Register Office for Scotland. The authorities assigned the reason that Gaelic was regarded as a minority language and asked them to change the name. Then Mr. Boyle reacted against the decision. After an investigation it was revealed that there was not any legal prohibition for them to use Gaelic names.<sup>22</sup>

These events may be seen as small exceptions by some people but it is obvious that they have deep impacts in the community; in the following stages these prejudiced attitudes may turn into discriminations and in the long run they are actually threats to continuance of that language. For example, in his report published in *Irish Examiner* (an Irish daily) Dúnbarrach (2006) wrote about the case of Máire Nic, a Belfast drama teacher and "young Irish speaker fighting discrimination against people for speaking their own languages". Dúnbarrach also noted that "Discrimination against linguistic groups is always the first instrument of oppression used against people and it is invariably the last to go". Such events are evidently much more discouraging than state politics or economic conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study surveyed the socio-cultural and linguistic reasons behind minority language loss. My view is not so pessimistic about language policies but it is obvious that just politic or economic based reasons are neither only reason nor only answers to minority language losses as Mühlhäusler (2002) writes "Empowering languages and making them more competitive by giving them grammars, lexicons, writing systems, and school syllabuses is a recipe that ignores a basic ecological fact: What supports one language may not support another language. Each language requires its own ecological system" (376). Because of the reversible sense of policies, they may not function as they are expected. People need to regard the non-political factors as Spolsky (2004) noted (e.g. language practices and beliefs,

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21 "No English? No Irish more like", story from *BBC News*, published: 29/09/2006.

22 "Gaelic first for parents", story from *BBC News*, published: 03/06/2003.

and with the other contextual forces) (222). However, people need to know socio-cultural and linguistic factors, which dominantly seem to affect minority languages.

World politics have been applying language policies for long years. In certain dates, language policies were directed by nationalist attitudes and caused socio-cultural reactions within societies. When one compared the religious based nationalist ideas behind the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations with that of in Irish and Hebrew revitalizations, the two faces of nationalism became significantly visible since two languages died out while the two others were revived by nationalist ideologies. However Irish and Hebrew had also some differences in terms of theory and practice of these ideas, in this sense, one can conclude that Hebrew created language ecology by socialising a language on the verge of dying, while Irish saw its own language as just a political representation of nationalist identity against English after independence and could not succeed in keeping continuance of a complete revitalization due to some other historical facts. Socio-cultural tolerance, on the other hand, is a closely related issue with cultural prejudices and nationalism in broad sense. As a result of cultural misunderstandings people may be restricted to their own languages or will completely lose their own languages. Even multicultural policies, provided in the name of revitalizing or saving cultures might be turned into integrations as a result of nationalist perspectives like creating a “White society”.

Besides socio-cultural reasons, the linguistic reasons are decisive in minority language loss. Inter-cultural mother tongue transmission may not take place if the new generations are not exposed to the natural exposures of language acquisition. In this process, the attitudes of families are primary factors. Discontinuities in different speech communities of the same language are precious for human being but are actually great disadvantages for minorities. Lastly, the language prejudices against minorities may emerge as a result of language misunderstandings and turn into personal policies in time and even discriminations against minority groups. In this context, the original aim of this study was to open a sociolinguistic explanation to minority language loss. In this paper, I have clarified socio-cultural and linguistic reasons behind minority language losses and left the solutions to further researches.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX-A

*Countries twelve or more languages according to Ethnologue*

Country	Number of languages	Constitutional recognition
Papua New Guinea	823	
Indonesia	726	Yes
Nigeria	505	
India	387	Yes (12)
Mexico	288	
Cameroon	279	
Congo, Democratic Republic	218	Yes (6)
China	201	Yes
Brazil	192	Yes
USA	176	

Sudan	174	
Philippines	169	Yes
Malaysia	139	
Tanzania	135	
Chad	132	
Nepal	120	Yes
Vanuatu	109	Yes
Burma	107	
Russia	100	Yes
Vietnam	93	
Peru	92	Yes
Canada	90	
Ethiopia	82	Yes
Laos	82	
Colombia	78	Yes
Côte d'Ivoire	77	
Thailand	75	
Ghana	70	
Iran	69	Yes
Pakistan	69	
Solomon Islands	69	Yes
Burkina-Fasco	66	Yes
Congo, Republic	61	Yes (3)
Kenya	61	
Central African Republic	60	
Guatemala	54	Yes
Benin	51	Yes
Uganda	43	Yes
Togo	42	
Gabon	41	Yes
Zambia	41	
Mali	40	Yes
Venezuela	40	Yes
Mozambique	39	
Bangladesh	38	Yes
New Caledonia	38	

Bolivia	37	
Senegal	36	Yes
Guinea	33	
Israel	33	
Italy	33	
France	29	
Namibia	29	Yes
South Africa	28	Yes (11)
Botswana	26	
Germany	25	
Bhutan	24	
Liberia	24	
Iraq	23	
Sierra Leone	23	
Ecuador	22	Yes
Singapore	21	Yes (4)
Guinea-Bissau	20	
Niger	20	
Paraguay	20	Yes
Zimbabwe	20	
Cambodia	19	
Micronesia	17	Yes
Netherlands	16	
Japan	15	
Malawi	15	Yes
Romania	15	
Suriname	15	
Syria	15	
Azerbaijan	14	
Panama	14	
Equatorial Guinea	13	
Greece	13	
Somalia	13	
Spain	13	Yes
Eritrea	12	Yes
Guyana	12	

Hungary	12	Yes
Mongolia	12	Yes
Switzerland	12	Yes (4)
United Kingdom	12	

**Table: 1:** “Countries with Twelve or More Languages According to *Ethnologue*” (Spolsky, 2004: 174-175)

## APPENDIX-B

### Monolingual countries with protection for minorities

Country	State, national, official language	Other recognitions	Year
Armenia	Armenian	National minorities rights	1995
Austria	German	Linguistic minorities	1929
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan language	Other languages spoken	1995
Brazil	Portuguese	Indian native languages	1988
Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Alongside Bulgarian	1991
Burkina Faso	French	National languages	1997
Colombia	Spanish	Ethnic minorities and dialects	1991
Costa Rica	Spanish	National languages of the native peoples	1999
Croatia	The Croatian language and the Latin script	Locally another language and Cyrillic alongside	1990
Ecuador	Spanish	All Ecuadorian	1998
El Salvador	Spanish	Autochthonous	1982
Eritrea	All Eritrean languages equal		1996
Estonia	Estonian	Minorities locally	1992
Ethiopia	Amharic federally	All locally	Draft 1994
Gabon	French working	National languages	1997
Georgia	Georgian	Abkhazian in Abkhazia; others protected	1991
Guatemala	Spanish	Vernaculars	1985
Hungary	Hungarian	National and ethnic minorities	1997
Indonesia	Bahasa Indonesia	Respected regional languages	1945-89
Iran	Persian	Regional and tribal languages and Arabic	1979-95
Iraq	Arabic	Kurdish regionally	1990
Kazakhstan	Kazak	Russian and others	1995
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz	Russian and others	1993
Latvia	Latvian	Ethnic minorities	1992-8

Macedonia	Macedonian	Others regionally alongside	1992
Malawi	All equal		1994
Mali	French	Other national languages	1991-2000
Malta	Maltese	English	1996
Mauritania	Arabic	Poular, Soninke and Wolof	1991
Moldova	Moldovan in Latin alphabet	Russian and others	1994
Mongolia	Mongolian	National minorities	1992
Mozambique	Portuguese	National languages	1990
Namibia	English	In private schools	1990
Nepal	Nepali in Devanagari script	Local mother languages	1990
New Zealand	(English not mentioned) Māori Language Act	Minority	1990
Nicaragua	Spanish	Community languages	1987-95
Pakistan	(Urdu not mentioned)	Preservation not mentioned	1999
Panama	Spanish	Indigenous communities	1994
Peru	Spanish	Quechua, Aymara and indigenous	1993?
Philippines	Filipino and English	Regional	1987
Poland	Polish	National and ethnic minorities	1997
Romania	Romanian	National minorities	1991
Russia	All languages equal		1993
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Serbian (ekavian and ijekavian dialects) in Cyrillic script	Latin script, national minorities locally	1992
Serbia (Serbia)	Serbo-Croatian and Cyrillic alphabet	Latin alphabet; national minorities regionally	1995
Serbia (Montenegro)	Serbian (ijekavian); Cyrillic and Latin alphabet	National minorities locally	1992
Singapore	Malay, English, Mandarin, or Tamil		1965-1993
Slovakia	Slovak	National and ethnic minorities	1992
Slovenia	Slovene	Italian and Hungarian locally	1991-2000
Spain	Castilian	Autonomous communities	1978-1992
Tajikistan	Tajik	Russian and others	1994

Uganda	English	Any other	1995
Ukraine	Ukrainian	Russian and national minorities	1996
Uzbekistan	Uzbek	Respect for nationalities and peoples	1992
Venezuela	Spanish	Indigenous locally	1999

Table 2: “Monolingual Countries with Protection for Minorities” (Spolsky, 2004: 144-146)

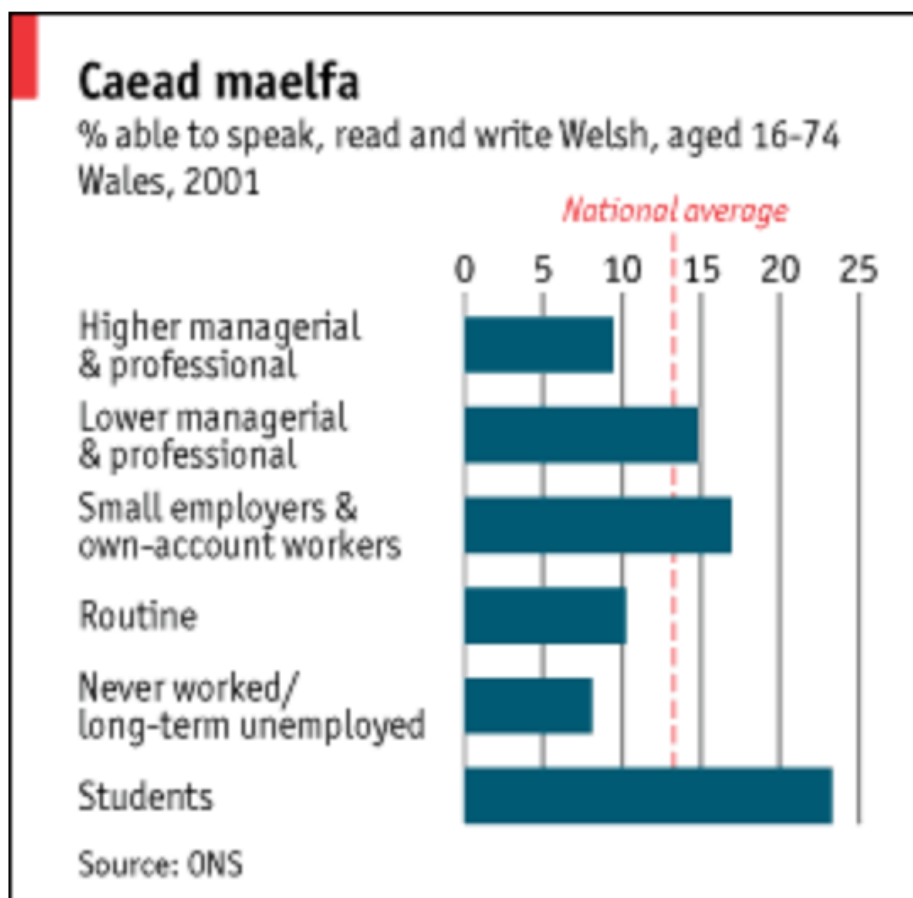
**APPENDIX-C**



**Table 3:** Welsh Language in Wales (source: *The Economist*)<sup>23</sup>

23 Article, “From mother tongue to meal ticket. Why the Welsh Language is making a comeback”. See <<http://www.economist.com/node/4275132>>

## APPENDIX-D



**Table 4:**  
Language speakers according to ages and employments (source: *The Economist*)<sup>24</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Erdal Ayan is a master's student studying on language education, linguistics and technologies in education. The current study was completed at Chemnitz University of Technology in 2007 and revised for publication in 2015. I thank a lot to Dr. Martin Weisser for his encouraging support and faculty members for their help during my stay in Germany. I also thank my close friend, Çetin Kolkaya, M.A. for his reading my manuscript and giving me valuable feedback.

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24 Tables 3 and 4 were retrieved from the article, "From mother tongue to meal ticket. Why the Welsh Language is making a comeback". See <<http://www.economist.com/node/4275132>>



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