

Nonstandard Languages:
The Outcasts of the Language Revitalization Movement

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Abstract

This thesis compares the failures of the creolization movement with the success of the language revitalization movement and seeks to determine which elements are missing from the former to make it as successful as the latter. Education policy, identity, and language ideology are all examined as contributors to the future success of creole inclusivity in education and society, as well as the potential benefits such a movement would include. Specifically examined are Siegel's research on creole education and Armstrong's work on language ideology.

Nonstandard Languages:

The Outcasts of the Language Revitalization Movement

Across the globe, there has been a surge of interest and effort toward language revival. Countries that had once abandoned their native language in order to adopt a more globalized one, or had their language ripped from them in a time of colonization, have been racing against the clock to revive their original languages before it is too late, investing time, money, government attention, and a spotlight in education policy. Some of these programs have been successful, some unsuccessful, and for many, it is too early to tell.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are other types of languages flourishing, ones that refuse to go away, to many people's dismay. These are nonstandard languages, which are viewed as the illegitimate offspring of two or more languages. These languages begin as a simple conglomeration of words use to bridge language gaps but over time gain a unique grammar and syntax, becoming full-fledged languages in their own right. Perception of them however remains negative, as they are viewed as incorrect versions of proper languages. Some more well-known nonstandard languages are Haitian Creole, Hawaiian Pidgin, and African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Because of the negativity associated with nonstandard languages, there is pressure on a governmental level, a societal level, or both, to forbid or repress the language as much as possible.

Unfortunately this social stigma can have huge detrimental effect on the children who grew up with a nonstandard language as their native tongue, including but not

limited to: poor performance in literacy and education, identity problems, decreased chance of higher education, and hindered upward social mobility. However studies indicate that social acceptance of nonstandard languages, such as incorporating them into the education system, would have the reverse effect, helping children to excel in school not just in their native tongue, but in the standard language as well.

There is more hindering nonstandard languages than just roadblocks in education; there is prejudice against them built into society itself, dating all the way back to the 17th century. This will be a difficult barrier to overcome but with solid language ideology and grassroots effort, many advances can be made to improve perception and inclusion of nonstandard languages.

This thesis seeks to examine the cultural and social elements that cause nonstandard languages to be rejected while welcoming language diversification, both on a sociological and sociopolitical level; the impact that those factors can have upon society as a whole; and potential solutions to address this problem.

Background

Language Attitude

What is proper language? Is a Boston accent more or less correct than a Texan accent? Is slang usage incorrect? In many instances, these differences are considered innocuous, nothing more than the brunt of jokes and regional differences. But in other cases, some methods of speaking are decried as improper and uneducated. What determines when one is wrong and when one is just different? More importantly, why do people feel the need to draw dividing lines between acceptable and unacceptable language in the first place?

Historian Peter Burke (1993) writes, “One of the most important of the signs of collective identity is language. Speaking the same language, or variety of language, as someone else is a simple and effective way of indicating solidarity; speaking a different language or variety of language is an equally effective way of distinguishing oneself from other individuals or groups” (p. 70).

Language, just like race, ethnicity, sex, and class, instantly allows people to label others and puts them in a category. In fact one could argue it is worse, as language provides not just a cultural or mental barrier, but a literal barrier that stops understanding at the source- communication. To accommodate other languages means to open the gates of one’s culture and allow uncontrollable change, ideas, and influence, as well as potential loss of status in one’s society due to that change, something that people avoid at all costs.

This is termed language attitude. Language attitudes are the opinions people have toward language, whether their own or someone else's. This thesis will examine the role that language attitude plays in the acceptance or rejection of nonstandard languages. Because nonstandard languages, with their borrowed vocabulary, still sound similar enough to the standard language that they cannot just be dismissed as an unintelligible foreign language, people feel the need to correct them and make them fit into their preconceived notions about language. This attitude captures much of the current negativity toward nonstandard languages.

Nonstandard Languages

The precise dividing line between the standard and nonstandard variety of a language will most likely never be agreed upon because language is constantly changing, but conceptually, the standard version of a language is the one used by the education system, higher class members of society, and/or the model for the written system (Cheshire, 2005). When one's grammar or pronunciation is corrected, it is corrected based off this idea of the standard language. The nonstandard variety of a language is any version of the language that differs from the standard, from slight changes like slang and regional dialect to varieties so different that they are functionally a separate language.

It is important to note that the standard language is not necessarily spoken by the majority of the population. The problems that have arisen exist precisely because in many areas, the standard language is spoken only by an elite minority, yet the rest of the population is held to that standard and judged according to it (Cheshire, 2005).

Nonstandard languages fall into different categories based on their origin. While the majority of this paper will refer to nonstandard languages as a whole, knowing the basic differences between the types is important to understand the terms used in the research cited.¹

The first type of nonstandard language is called a pidgin. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* defines a pidgin as, “a simplified form of speech developed as a medium of trade, or through other extended but limited contact, between groups of speakers who have no other language in common” (Matthews, 2014, p. 304). Essentially when a situation arises where two groups speaking different languages attempt to communicate, they develop a form of communication using words from one or both languages. It does not have a functional grammar or other elements necessary for a language. However, if a pidgin is spoken long enough and by enough people, it will evolve into an expanded pidgin, with a fully functioning grammar, and has all the components necessary to constitute a language:

The second type of nonstandard language is a creole language.

Defined, in classic treatments, as a language that has developed historically from a pidgin. In theory, accordingly, a pidgin develops from trade or other contacts; it has no native speakers, its range of use is limited, and its structure is simplified. Later it becomes the only form of speech that is common to a community; it is learned by new speakers and used for all purposes; its structure and vocabulary are enlarged; and so on. Thence, more generally, of any form of speech perceived

¹ It is necessary to note that the following categories are linguistically distinct and their grouping together is purely to examine the negative language attitude that they all face due to similar social situations. Very broad definitions are used to keep from a definitions debate and to instead focus on shared social stigma.

as having structural features similar to those of pidgins, or of forms traditionally described as ‘creoles’, or known to have arisen historically over a characteristically short period; whether or not development from a pidgin is posited or can be demonstrated. (Matthews, 2014, pp. 87-88)

As the last line of the definition hints, in the past few years, academics have called the relation between pidgins and creoles into question, leading to the technical distinction between creoles and expanded pidgins. The distinction is not of importance in this paper; the terms used in this paper will be distinguished only based on the research from which they are derived.

Third and finally, there are some nonstandard dialects with enough variation between the standard and non-standard varieties that many argue they ought to be considered separate languages, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (Cheshire, 2005). Because many of the studies here show that these dialects face the same obstacles as creoles and pidgins, they will be included in this discussion.

Creoles, expanded pidgins, and nonstandard dialects, while each technically distinct from the others, all suffer from the same negative perception and discrimination from the general populace, governments, and mainstream media and as a result, unless something changes, the status quo will continue to unfairly effect those who speak nonstandard languages.

The Problems in the Status Quo

The issue at hand is not the sustainability of nonstandard languages, but the way they are perceived by the public. Nonstandard languages are often viewed as degenerate

or broken versions of their standard counterparts because for the most part, they utilize the same vocabulary. When speakers hear the same words they themselves use, but in what they perceive as an ungrammatical way, they assume it is incorrect. Speakers of the nonstandard versions of languages are thus often ostracized and put down in many spheres of society—education, the job market, politics, and more.

While the problems arise from social perception, the consequences are much more concrete: "The situation is complicated by social attitudes towards standard and nonstandard language. Stereotypes about 'incorrect', 'careless' and 'ugly' speech persists, despite 40 years of sociolinguistic work demonstrating that dialects and creoles are well-formed language systems" (Cheshire, 2005, p. 2).

Prolific creole researcher, Jeff Siegel, outlines the four major obstacles that nonstandard language speakers around the world universally face because of their language. "These obstacles include: (1) negative attitudes of teachers towards students whose language differs markedly from the standard, (2) negative self-image of students because of denigration of their language and culture, (3) repression of self-expression because of the requirement to use an unfamiliar form of language, and (4) difficulty of acquiring literacy and other skills in a second language or dialect" (Siegel, 2007, p. 67).

These obstacles can lead to significant social and economic disadvantages, such as higher dropout rates, unemployment, and restricted access to higher education or climbing the social ladder (Siegel, 2005b). Migge outlines just a few of these, saying, "Children from predominantly P/C [pidgin/creole]-speaking backgrounds achieve lower grades, have greater difficulties with reading and writing, are much less likely to finish

school or to proceed and finish third level education, and to obtain highly skilled, socially important, stable and well-paid jobs” (Migge, 2010, p. 12). Many policy makers blame nonstandard language speakers’ poor education on their language skills but in fact it is the other way around.

These policies are not just affecting a few students here or there; there are countries whose entire student populations are disadvantaged in this way. In Haiti, the language of education is French, while nearly every student speaks Haitian Creole. In Hawaii, the language of instruction has been switched from English to Hawaiian, yet a large portion of the student population speaks Hawaiian Pidgin. In schools in the US, especially in inner-cities, a huge number of children speak AAVE. This is a global phenomenon affecting over a hundred million speakers (Seigel, 2010).

The seemingly obvious solution is to alter the education system somehow. One author notes:

A further problem lies in the fact that learning is known to be better and more efficient when it is done through the medium of the mother tongue (UNESCO 1968), which suggests that dialects and creoles rather than standard varieties should be used in the classroom, at least in the early years of education, and for the initial acquisition of literacy. (Cheshire, 2005, p. 2)

Not surprisingly, linguists have been advocating and working toward this goal for decades, with and without success. They have worked to educate teachers and the public about the differences between standard and nonstandard languages, have carried out research on how students use language in the classroom, and have created resources and

programs that help transition from a nonstandard language to a standard one in the classroom (Cheshire, 2005). The programs and studies that have been performed have shown a tremendous amount of improvement in literacy rates, acquisition of the *standard* language, and science and math. However despite the extremely positive results and overwhelming support from linguists for a change in education policy, very few lasting changes have come about.

Education Studies

There are three different methods of incorporating nonstandard languages into education that have been studied, 1) instrumental programs, 2) accommodating programs, and 3) awareness or contrastive analysis programs (Siegel, 2007). Instrumental programs are those which begin grade school in the nonstandard language, introduce the standard language, and switch over completely over the course of a few years. These programs incorporate nonstandard languages in the classroom the most.

The second type, accommodating programs, are taught in the standard language, but allow or even encourage the use of the dialect or creole in composition or conversation. This way, students are encouraged to express themselves but are still exposed to the standard variety of the language.

The third type, awareness or contrastive analysis programs, are also taught in the standard language but involve the teacher actively explaining the differences between the standard and nonstandard varieties, so the student learns to consciously recognize and switch between them, like two different languages. These programs have been especially useful with dialects, such as AAVE. Each of these methods has had astounding results;

not a single long-term study has come back with zero or negative improvement. (Seigel, 2007).

A study at Aurora University conducted with a group of African American students from Chicago showed that over the course of 11 weeks, contrastive analysis *decreased* the use of AAVE in writing assignments by 59%, compared to the control group where it increased by 8.5% (Rickford, 2002).

Contrastive analysis studies conducted in South Carolina with students speaking non-standard English found that engaging the student in their own tongue not only improved their standard English literacy skills but also their math and science scores. (Blake and Van Sickle, 2001; Van sickle et al, 2002).

So not only does promotion of the student's native tongue improve their literacy in their own language, it has been shown to improve the proper use of the standard tongue, and also applies to other subjects, like math and science.

Language Revitalization Movement

While it is absolutely critical to continue pushing for creole inclusion in education policy, there must be more to the situation, or the results from the education studies would be more readily accepted. I believe an examination of the language revitalization movement can provide insight into society's welcoming some languages while rejecting others.

Languages are being seen as a valuable resource, an important part of cultural heritage that ought to be preserved. Linguists have realized the unique of each language for some time, but only recently has it become an important issue to those outside of

academia, with many governments, urban populations, and grassroots movements now advocating for the restoration of the language of their heritage.

Hebrew

The most effective case of language revival in history is the revival of the Hebrew language. The language was practically extinct, and its speakers scattered all over the globe, when Zionists in the late 1800s began to spread the dream of the revival of the Hebrew language. Through sheer willpower and enthusiasm, this small group of people, led by Ben-Yehuda, coined modern day terms for Hebrew and began teaching and spreading spoken Hebrew. Due to religious and nationalistic identity, it succeeded, and Hebrew schools were formed. The children of the founding generation heard their parents' attempts at home, were immersed in Hebrew at school, married other students who learned it at school, and raised their children as native speakers in the home: "So by the late 1920's, the grandchildren of the generation who first put their children in Hebrew immersion in the 1890's were likely to be native speakers of Hebrew" (Anoby, 1997, p. 15).

After that, any immigrants arriving in the Jewish territory of Palestine was forced to learn modern Hebrew if they wanted to work. Even today, if one immigrates to Israel, he is placed in temporary assimilation housing where he lives while learning Hebrew (Anoby, 1997). The revival of Hebrew is one of the most impressive language feats of history, and provides many lessons about the solid combination of a strong sense of cultural identity and an immersive education, to language revivalists everywhere.

Irish Gaelic

Irish Gaelic has been taught as a mandatory course in the school system for almost a century, yet of the million people in Ireland that say they speak the language, only 4% of those say they use it on a daily basis, according to the Central Statistics Office of Ireland in 2007 (Armstrong, 2011).

However in the past few decades, a new urban revival of the language has sprung up. Three of the biggest factors have been 1) immersion schools, that teach the students Irish Gaelic and transition into Gaelic-only instruction, 2) Gaelic communities, known as Gaeltacht, where the members only speak Irish Gaelic, creating a rich immersive environment for daily practice, and 3) government commitment to the language programs, with funding for both the schools and the communities (Armstrong, 2011). It is well worth noting though, that the government support came over a decade after the schools and communities were established, and they were started through a grassroots movement. So while government support has been beneficial to the language revival, it was not the cornerstone of it.

In Armstrong's interviews at the different Gaeltachtaí, he noted an underlying sense of identity that was motivation for the Irishmen. For some it was strong nationalism, for others, pride in their cultural heritage, and for some it was even just a sense of community (Armstrong, 2011). They did not need the language to communicate; they chose to use it because it meant something to them. One member of a Gaeltacht explains what drove him to reclaim his heritage language:

[Irish is important] because a language is what makes a country. [...] If you went to France and all the French were speaking in English, it wouldn't be very French. I think it sort of makes me... I can say I'm Irish, and I can speak my language, so I'm Irish; it gives you identity. There's that phrase, *Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*. [A land without a language, a land without a soul]. (Armstrong, 2011, p. 159)

However, Irish Gaelic success is not uniform across the country; the 2013 Irish Language Survey shows a significant difference in numbers between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, with 43% basic fluency in the former and only 14% fluency in the latter (Darmody, 2015). While Irish Gaelic is rapidly growing in the Republic of Ireland, it is barely changed in Northern Ireland. A closer examination reveals a few factors that seem to be making all the difference—in Northern Ireland, the language is associated with Catholicism, keeping Protestants or non-religious citizens from wanting to associate with it; there are no *Gaeltachtaí* or other Irish-speaking communities; and parents in Northern Ireland are significantly less likely to speak the language, attempt to push their children to speak it, and view it as important for its own sake (Darmody, 2015). These three factors pinpoint a major difference in language policy and show just how impactful social and familial influence can be.

These are but two of many documented language revivals that have occurred or are occurring right now; other notable revivals include Hawaiian, Maori, Catalán, Cornish, and multiple Native American languages, just to name a few. Revival linguistics has even become a new discipline of linguistics that is rapidly growing. However, while reviving critically endangered languages is an incredible and worthy feat, it is amazing to

note the remarkable difference between society's current zeal for language revival and simultaneous disgust for nonstandard languages.

Why is it that academics can push for recognition of creole languages in areas for decades and failed, yet some countries have turned 180 degrees and reinstated nearly extinct languages on a national scale and been successful? The answer undoubtedly comes down to perspective and value. These languages are seen as national treasures, not national disgraces. They are precious and thus are prioritized, by the people, the government, or both.

Their methodology is fairly similar to the desired approach for nonstandard languages—an education system that phases in the desired tongue from the native tongue at a young age, literacy programs, and access to language materials such as books, newspapers, radio shows, and music. And while eventually those things will hopefully also exist for nonstandard languages, there needs to be a starting foundation of cultural identity and enthusiasm for the nonstandard languages first.

Language Attitude and Ideology

Clearly perception of the value of language plays a large role in affecting language policy. As Migge states, “Language attitudes, however, probably represented the most crucial factor hampering change. Many decision makers, as well as the population at large, did not see P/Cs [pidgin/creoles] as legitimate tools of education, but perceived them as corrupt derivatives of the standard language that lack a clearly defined grammar” (Migge, 2010, p. 11).

This leads to the ultimate question—how can we cause countries or communities to shift their perspective on nonstandard languages from something shameful to something worth making room for in society?

Two formal language ideologies can give a peek into why acceptance of creoles is such an uphill battle. The first is monolingualism. Farr (2011) gives a bit of historical background:

As English became dominant over French in Britain, the minority languages of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland fared less well, indicating that an ideology of monolingualism, or one language-one nation, was gaining in predominance.

Toward the end of the 18th century, the French Revolution vividly promoted the notion that ‘language makes the nation’ . . . With the spread of universal education in France, this language policy became educational policy as well. Patois [regional dialects] were viewed ‘as barriers to communication, as obstacles to the spread of the ideas of the Revolution. (p. 651)

Farr (2011) goes on to show that that ideology spread:

The pairing of nationalization and language standardization yielded an ‘ideology of contempt’ toward minority languages and dialects, which in turn contributed to the disappearance of ‘small languages’ worldwide. Clearly, wherever Europeans colonized or otherwise dominated, this ideology was established, along with a belief in a ‘survival of the fittest’ social Darwinism of language, and that bilingualism is ‘onerous’. Thus monolingualism in a standard language became the desirable norm and a widespread, deeply rooted language ideology. (p. 652)

Whether countries ought to be multilingual is not the question at hand, and not many linguists are pushing for that as necessary for nonstandard integration. That is where the second ideology comes in—language standardization.

Language standardization began around the same time as monolingualism, with the rise of the printing press and education for the masses. This established the idea that everyone should share a Standard English, though what defines Standard English has never been concretely stated: “In the U.S., what is considered Standard varies regionally, and what distinguishes any particular language use as ‘Standard’ is actually the absence of stigmatized linguistic forms, not the presence of particular forms” (Farr, 2011, p. 653). The stigmatized forms, naturally, are those that bear resemblance to the creole or dialectal counterparts.

Farr (2011) goes on to explain how the commoditization of language assigns it a social currency. He writes:

Thus the abstract notion of Standard English becomes objectified as something people can possess or lack: it is an asset that can be acquired, and then, as an object, it is commoditized, ‘swept up into the brisk commerce of personal socio-economic identity...[,] a brisk commerce of goods and services for which experts make themselves available’. Since every individual is believed to have the freedom to ‘achieve professionally, personally, and, as expressed by a number of speech consultants, psychologically’ those who do not acquire this commodity are viewed as choosing not to. Standard English thus becomes a cultural emblem via social processes cast in individualistic terms. Such processes underlie the

promotion of English (only) in the U.S. and elsewhere and are promoted through particular language policies, as discussed in the next section” (pp. 653-654).

This is the social realm that most Western languages with nonstandard counterparts fall into. Non-conformity to Standard English is viewed as intentional and deserves to be socially punished accordingly.

As if that societal hurdle is not enough to overcome, those being discriminated against often buy into and perpetuate the lie themselves. Many of the countries or locales have given up their language in favor of a more universal tongue willingly, having bought into the idea that it is necessary to give up aspects of their culture in order to fit into the new globalized world. Perhaps no example is so well-known for this as the Oakland resolution.

Oakland

In the infamous Oakland controversy of 1996 in California, the schoolboard passed a very progressive resolution to recognize Ebonics, or AAVE, as a legitimate language and require some instruction in AAVE, primarily because their English scores were the lowest in the country and they were trying to improve them. However this was interpreted by the media and the general public as an attempt to remove African Americans from English classes and reduce their opportunities to learn and be competitive in Standard English. It became a national scandal overnight and eventually the board had to rescind their decision. The misunderstanding was understandable to some extent—there were some poorly worded phrases in the resolution that were justifiably questioned—but in testimonies at the hearings, every linguist questioned

staunchly defended the Oakland resolution. However, perhaps the saddest aspect of the entire incident is that the spokespeople for the African American community—educators, political leaders, even the Reverend Jesse Jackson—were decrying the resolution right along everyone else (Wolfram, 1998).

Many believe that education in the nonstandard language “deprives children of the instruction they need to get the economic benefits that speakers of standard varieties have, and condemns them to permanent underclass status” (Siegel 2002, p. 13) and that sadly often includes the families of the children themselves.

And that is not just limited to AAVE; the same phenomenon occurred in Hawaii, with families forbidding their children to speak creole in the home out of fear it would hold them back, and in Haiti, where many parents pulled their children out of the local schools that tried programs teaching in Haitian Creole instead of French. As long as those who use the language accept exclusion of it in society, even encourage it, no progress will be made.

Solution

There is no cut and dry solution to the problem but there are a few steps that will need to happen to make advances in nonstandard acceptance. Learning from the Language Revitalization Movement, continued attempts at influencing education policy, and most importantly empowering those individuals that all of this work is for; these are but a few of the steps that can be taken to change the face of creoles.

Language Revitalization Movement

It would be a grave mistake not to take notes from the Language Revitalization Movement and compare them to work in nonstandard languages. Its education policies, the involvement of the government, how the grassroots movements are formed; each aspect holds a wealth of information that countries should attempt to emulate.

The most noticeable difference, and the linchpin of the movement, is the ideology of its speakers. In his study on language ideology, Armstrong (2011) writes, “Though ideology is a key to language vitality, the promotion of ideology as an aspect of language revitalization remains relatively understudied. To effectively support the use of threatened languages, we need to better understand how new language ideologies are advanced in language revitalization movements, particularly in organizations and at the micro level” (p. 147).

Armstrong (2011) goes on to describe what must be done for a language to force itself into the public eye and demand to be heard, saying, “If one wishes to revitalize or revive a threatened language against the dominant language ideology, one must promote a counter-ideology that normalizes or renormalizes the use of the threatened language in

some sites, domains or situations. Successful language revitalization or revival will involve promoting a new ideology about the value of the language and its use” (p. 161).

What that ideology is will depend on each unique situation, but language preservation and reconnecting with cultural heritage has been the counter-ideology of choice with the more successful programs thus far, including but not limited to Hebrew, Irish Gaelic, and Hawaiian. However, Armstrong (2011) issues a warning as well:

Ideological socialization is costly, costly socially, and also possibly costly economically. Specifically considering the costs associated with norms, new norms are established and defended through sanctioning, and sanctioning can take the form of any number of a wide range of social tactics, varying in both social cost and coercive force, from gossip, reproof and mild entreaty at one end of the spectrum to violence and expulsion at the other. But mild or militant, all these forms of sanctioning will entail some social risks and costs to the sanctioners (p. 162)

Should AAVE speakers demand better programs in the education system, they should expect another Oakland outrage. However if AAVE speakers stand together, with prominent African American spokespersons standing with them this time, not against them, I believe that their social influence and voice in political decisions is strong enough that the movement could very well be successful.

Empowering Nonstandard Language Speakers

None of the ideology or social capital matters if the nonstandard language speakers themselves are not on board, and in a very active way. The single biggest difference between the efforts made in language revival and nonstandard language acceptance is the attitude and energy of the language speaking groups themselves. In almost all the primary instances of the Language Revitalization Movement, the efforts began and/or were primarily carried on the backs of the people themselves, not the government.

As Armstrong's (2011) language ideology research indicates, a strong grassroots campaign is necessary to bring about successful language revival. "I have focused on language ideology at the micro level as I believe that successful language revitalization may be more a result of bottom-up social activism than top-down social management" (p. 163).

Grassroots

Though not the focus of this paper, it is undeniable that targeting education policy will be a huge part of creole inclusion; no progress will be made without involvement in the education system. While research is important, Siegel (2007), leading researcher on creoles, cautions:

For example, rather than writing articles calling once again for more teacher training to include sociolinguistics, linguists and applied linguists need to get the message to teachers themselves – by disseminating information in non-technical terms, running workshops, attending educational conferences and meetings, and

publishing articles in journals read by teachers. In other words, for linguistic knowledge to have an effect, it will have to go beyond the current boundaries of both linguistics and applied linguistics (p. 80).

In effect, he argues for the same thing as Armstrong—more grassroots work.

Social Media

While statistical analysis has not yet been published on the effectiveness of social media on social issues, anecdotal evidence has shown time and time again the power that social media yields over public awareness. From Twitter and Tumblr's involvement in political activism in the Middle East to the ice bucket challenge, social media has changed the face of social issues. Tumblr is a site comprised of social activists who thrive on spreading the word about anything that can be perceived of as a social justice issue. Reddit hosts popular online discussion threads called AMAs (Ask Me Anything) with experts that receive huge amounts of feedback and attention. Twitter spreads news faster than news sources themselves these days. Pitch this right and the identity to self-expression through native language use could be the next big social media hype. At best, awareness leads to action; at worse, nothing happens immediately, but the next generation of policy makers and teachers are at least aware of the issue and perhaps more receptive to nonstandard languages.

Conclusion

The good news about social movements is that the more isolated instances one can make happen, the more likely others will be to jump on the bandwagon, so once the ball is rolling, the movement should make significant amounts of progress.

The western world is the cause of monolingualism and standardization of language, and other countries fell in line to be a part of that global community. Ideally with the western world's new priorities set on language preservation, other countries will come to prioritize it as well; many already do.

The difficult part will be making sure that in the march forward, nonstandard languages do not get left behind. This includes continued work in the education community, not just in research but in grassroots efforts, communities, and teacher workshops. Even more important is the need to reach out to the nonstandard language speaking communities themselves and educate and empower them to lobby for their languages. Social media can potentially be a huge help in spreading the word, not just to nonstandard language speakers, but to today's youth who are incredibly passionate and vocal about social justice on social media.

To follow in the footsteps of the most successful revitalized languages, the ideologies surrounding nonstandard languages must become a cultural icon, a symbol of heritage that will be eagerly protected, raised up on a pedestal, not just in the deep dark corners of the ivory tower of academia by eager linguists, but in the public square by those who currently are told to be ashamed of it.

We should do it for the sake of education, for the rich linguistic data mine that creoles contain, for the sake of language preservation, but most importantly to protect the heritage of those who do not know just how important and unique their language is, to safeguard it until the day that they can and want to guard it for themselves.

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