

Language

- Language is the most important aspect of culture
- Cultural identity for most groups is tied to language
- Languages have evolved over long periods of time
 - First Step: New Dialect
 - A dialect is the regional form of a language
 - Dialects can have:
 - * Different pronunciations of the same words
 - * Different spellings
 - * Different vocabulary
 - * Different Euphemisms/sayings
 - If a dialect becomes unintelligible to its parent language, it's considered a new language
- New languages also form through mixing
 - Pidgin language: mix of two languages
 - Basic form of communication
 - No grammar rules
 - Limited vocabulary
 - Not a first language for anyone

- Over time a pidgin language can evolve into a Creole Language
 - Hybrid of 2 languages
 - Vocabulary expanded
 - Grammar rules developed
 - Becomes a first language
 - Examples:
 - * Haitian Creole is a mix of French and African languages
 - * Swahili is a mix of Arabic and African languages

- Languages that are no longer used are called Extinct (Dead) Language
 - Extinct languages have no native speakers
 - Written forms may still exist/some people may still learn language
 - Examples:
 - Latin
 - Native American languages

- Revived Languages are Extinct languages that have been brought back
 - Revival is due to:
 - Desire by ethnic groups/institutions to preserve culture
 - Devolution (gov't cedes authority to a lower gov't which allows revival)
 - Gov't promotes minority languages to prevent ethnic problems.
 - Nationalism (groups get independence, return to native language)
 - Vocabulary is updated

- Classifying Languages is largely cultural
 - Chinese is a collection of dialects that are not necessarily mutually intelligible
 - Chinese is united by a ideographic writing system
 - Is considered a single language because the Chinese gov't call is a single language.
 - Croation, Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin languages are mutually intelligible.
 - Each group considers their own language separate and distinct
 - Serbian written in Cyrillic; Others written with Western alphabet
- Official Languages are languages designated by the government for use
 - Single Official Languages elevate a single group above the rest
 - Intent is to unite different groups
 - Often results in resentment by and bilingualism among minorities
 - Multiple official languages puts minority languages on equal footing with dominant language
 - Usually one of the official languages is a lingua franca.