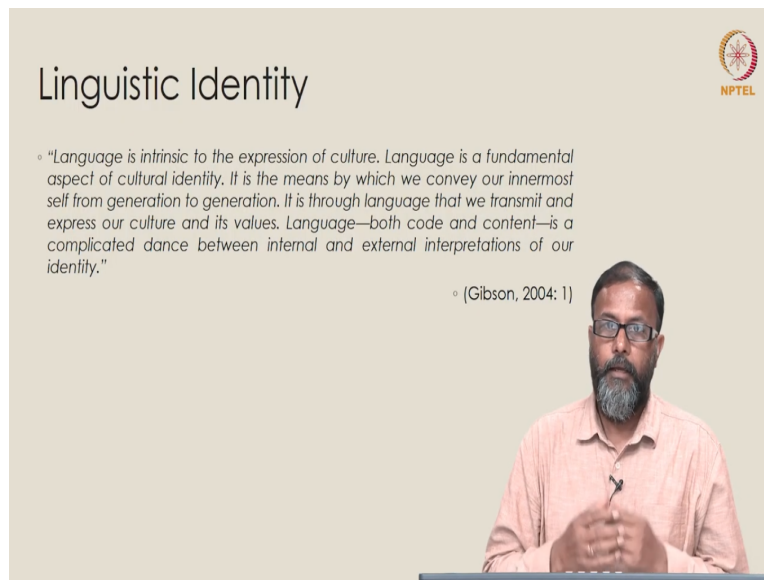


Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
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Linguistic Identity and Language Movements

Welcome to class today. We are going to talk about linguistic identity and language movements all around us. I will be taking up certain examples all over the world, to sensitize you towards instrumentality of language, in organizing communities and constructing identity and a geo-political, socio-political urge, to assert it. These languages and the speakers and speech communities are struggling to get their share. They want to be recognized, accepted and given prestige value to the language they speak. And it has generated a lot of tension and movements around the world.

Though this lecture is not exhaustive talking about all kinds of tensions and movements around the world, I will try to make you understand with two or three examples. And we will talk about how some of these movements that started as a linguistic struggle and language movement, turned into a violent conflict and ultimately resulted in separatist tendencies. So today we are going to talk about language identity and language movements.

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The slide features a title 'Linguistic Identity' at the top left. To the right is the NPTEL logo. Below the title is a quote: "Language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. Language is a fundamental aspect of cultural identity. It is the means by which we convey our innermost self from generation to generation. It is through language that we transmit and express our culture and its values. Language—both code and content—is a complicated dance between internal and external interpretations of our identity." Below the quote is the citation "(Gibson, 2004: 1)". In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing Professor Dr. Om Prakash, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light pink shirt, speaking into a microphone.

In order to make it clear and easy for you, I would like to quote Gibson, 2004, who beautifully explains the instrumentality of language in our creation of identity. I quote from Gibson, 2004. He says “language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. Language is a fundamental aspect of cultural identity. It is the means by which we convey our innermost

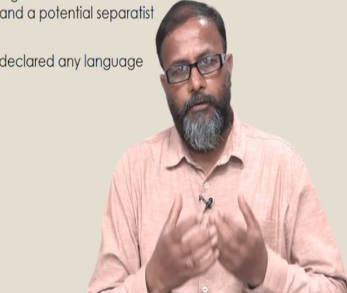
self from generation to generation. It is through language that we transmit and express our culture and its values. Language, both code and content is a complicated dance between internal and external interpretations of our identity”, I unquote. In such powerful and self-explanatory expressions, Gibson gives us the idea of linguistic identity. Language is a vigorous marker of our identity. You can see all around, somebody who does not speak like you, feels alien and distant from you.

And suppose you are walking on the streets of, let us say, Delhi and it happened to me somebody who speaks Tamil, a sudden bond emerges, you identify with the person. The person looks so familiar. That is the power of language. It has a sense of authorizing. It distinguishes between us and them. It is a cohesive bond that we develop with the members of the speakers in that community. And language binds us together. But sometimes a speaker feels that the language he or she speaks or as a community, when it feels that the language they speak does not get prestige value, appropriate status, and it is neglected, in terms of hegemonic exclusion, it turns out to be an agitation, a demand to be recognized, to be accepted and to have equal rights. The United Nations also recognizes linguistic rights as a very important human right. So that is the power of language that you know that constructs our identity.

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- Multilingualism is an unmarked phenomenon throughout the world, however, its practices and characters are different.
- In some cases it manifests a harmonious coexistence of the different languages, in others it turns into violent conflicts.
- Multilingualism in South East Asia and Africa has not resulted in separatist tendencies, however, in countries like Canada, Spain, and Belgium, multilingualism and assertion of linguistic identities have resulted into intense linguistic tension and a potential separatist tendency.
- USA prefers to ignore the societal multilingualism and has not declared any language as its official language.



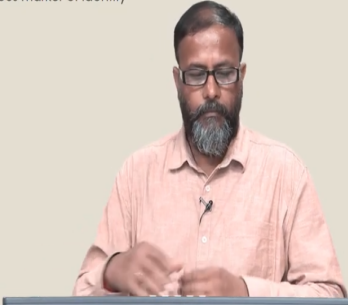
This kind of expression and this kind of sense prevail in multilingual societies, where we have a number of languages spoken, and each language is competing with the other. Multilingualism is an unmarked phenomenon throughout the world, however its practices and

characteristics are different, depending on the reasons. So in some cases it manifests a harmonic coexistence, like India for that matter. But in others it turns out to be a violent conflict like the case of Bangladesh erstwhile Pakistan for that matter. We will talk about that case. So multilingualism in south-east Asia and Africa has not resulted in a separatist tendency by and large barring a few movements. And they have a history of pluricultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual societies, which have stayed in harmony and coexistence for centuries. We will see some cases and understand this phenomenon of language movements.

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- Given the multicultural and multi-ethnic composition of a particular country it needs to have a well-defined language policy in order to avoid pertinent linguistic tension.
- The expression 'Linguistic Conflict' represents the power of language to generate potential tensions, conflict situations and separatist tendencies.
- Other socio-cultural indices such as religion, race, tribe, social history may have their own share in creating conflict, however, language as a vigorous marker of identity stands at the centre-stage in such developments.




So we need to understand that the majority of the countries have a stated policy on official language. And why do they need to have a stated position? What purpose does it serve? If you want to understand more about it, you should watch the videos on official languages, on language planning and policy. You will get more about it.

However, the expression linguistic conflict represents the power of a language to generate potential tension, conflict situations and separatist tendencies. The moment, we say linguistic conflicts, that means, there is a struggle. A struggle against perceived hegemonic expansion of a particular language. And always remember, the power of the speakers of a particular language, the social, political, economic powers of a particular speaker of a particular language, are projected onto the language they speak. And language becomes powerful. A powerful mode of expression. And with growing power and expansion, other languages may feel threatened, other speakers of other languages may feel threatened. So a kind of conflict, a kind of tension, generates out of it. So other social and cultural indices such as religion, race,

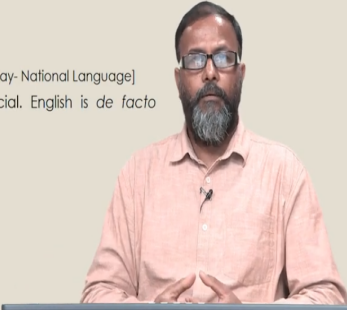
tribe, social history, they all have their own share in flaring of the issue. But at the center stage stands the language. And we need to understand that, this linguistic identity becomes a bonding, binding factor. It creates a cohesive bond, to fuel such movements.

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Official Languages

- 178 countries of the world recognize an official language, 101 of them recognize more than one.
- India: Hindi, English at Central Level;
- Pakistan: Urdu;
- Bangladesh: Bangla;
- Afghanistan: Pashto and Dari
- Sri Lanka: Sinhala and Tamil [English Link Language]
- Nepal: Nepali
- Bhutan: Dzongkha [National Language]
- China: Standard Mandarin
- Singapore: English, Chinese (mandarin), Malay, and Tamil [Malay- National Language]
- United States has not declared any language as official. English is de facto language of Administration.

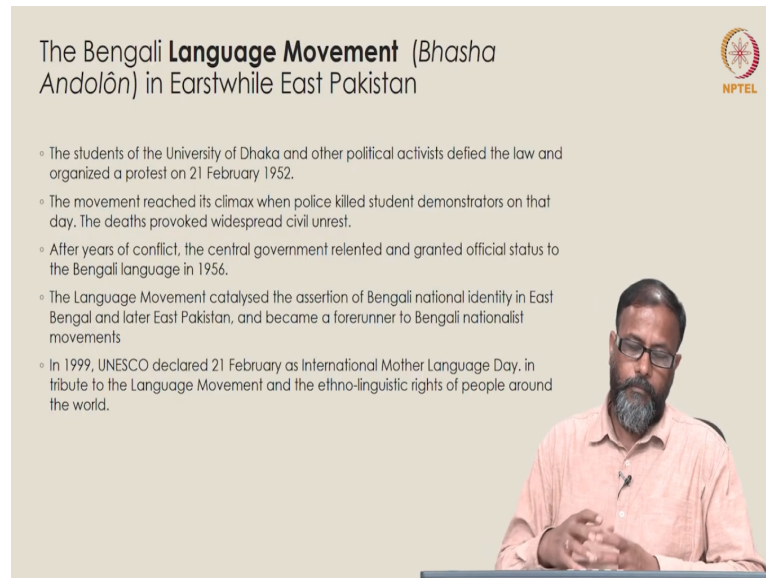


Now looking at the status of official languages, here is some data just to understand the facts. So 178 countries, this is not the total number, but out of all the countries, 178 countries of the world recognize an official language and 101 out of 178, they recognize more than one as official language, more than one language as official languages. And to give you a feel, India for that matter, where we have Hindi as official language. English as an official language and a variety of regional languages at state government levels, official languages. India has a schedule 8 that recognizes 22 official languages. Then Pakistan, where we have Urdu as official language, Bangladesh as Bangla, Afghanistan Pashto and Dari, in Sri Lanka Sinhala and Tamil, English is linked language, in Nepal Nepali, however the second majority language Maithili and the third one Bhojpuri are also very prominent there. But Nepali is a stated official language of Nepal. Bhutan, Dzongkha, it is a national language, however a variety of other scientific languages are spoken in the region.

China, standard Mandarin, also we also call it Chinese standard Mandarin, however different dialects and varieties of Mandarin apart from other languages, minority languages are also spoken there. Singapore has more than one, so it has English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, where Malay is a national language and four languages are recognized as official languages of Singapore. And the list goes on. Interestingly the United States of America has no official

stated position but de facto English remains the language of all administration and at federal and state levels. We will come to English only movement of the USA later on, in the talk.

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The Bengali **Language Movement** (*Bhasha Andolôn*) in Earstwhile East Pakistan

- The students of the University of Dhaka and other political activists defied the law and organized a protest on 21 February 1952.
- The movement reached its climax when police killed student demonstrators on that day. The deaths provoked widespread civil unrest.
- After years of conflict, the central government relented and granted official status to the Bengali language in 1956.
- The Language Movement catalysed the assertion of Bengali national identity in East Bengal and later East Pakistan, and became a forerunner to Bengali nationalist movements
- In 1999, UNESCO declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day, in tribute to the Language Movement and the ethno-linguistic rights of people around the world.


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Now let us take a recent example of a linguistic movement that turned into a separatist movement and culminated in the creation of a new nation-state, country called Bangladesh. In 1947, after partition, Pakistan was created with two non-contiguous locations, geographical areas, one is East Pakistan the other is West Pakistan. Then Pakistan adopted Urdu as its national and official language and though Pakistan, the newly created Pakistan was multilingual but it adopted only Urdu as its official language and it was imposed on all provinces. There was a huge protest in erstwhile Pakistan, the other Pakistan, East Pakistan that is now Bangladesh for recognizing Bangla as the official language of this region.

And on 21st February 1952, students of University of Dhaka and a number of other political activists assembled there to protest against it. The protest got violent and the establishment opened fire and many people died. And that flared up this movement and later on, in 1956 the central government relented and granted Bengali language as official status. However it did not stop there, because by the time the Bangla language and Bengali nationalism were intertwined. They were intertwined and this Bengali nationalism movement took up. And finally in 1971 as we know the Indo-Pakistan war and Bangladesh was created. That is the history of this Bhasha Andolon, in erstwhile East Pakistan. And to mark the significance of mother tongue all over the world and to address the sentiments of speakers of different languages, minority languages, excluded languages as well as many stream languages,


UNESCO declared 21st February as International Mother Language Day and we celebrate it every year and mark the you know a derived prestige out of declaring and you know practicing our mother tongue.

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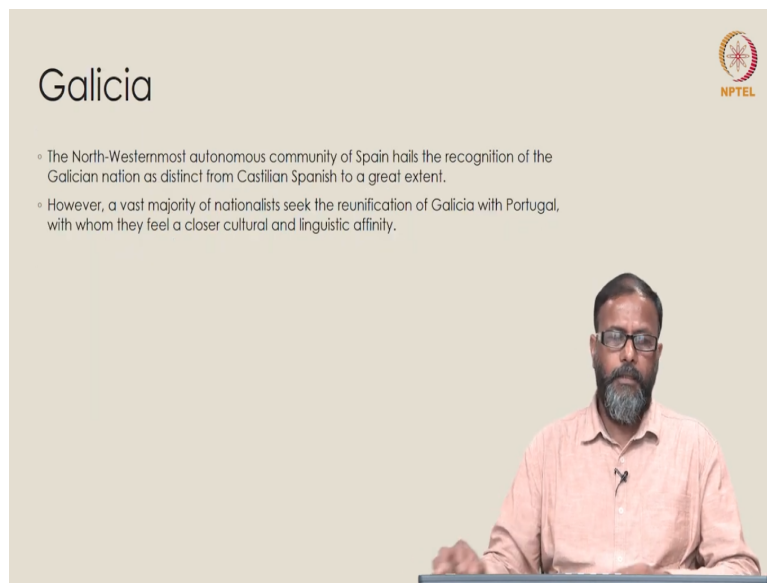
Canada: Quebeco

- The ongoing Quebeco movement in the eastern Canadian province that arises from Quebec being the only French-majority province in the mostly English-speaking country.
- The declaration of both languages to have equal status and as official languages of the country may have appeased a sizeable population, however, many separatists demand varying degrees of autonomy, including complete independence.
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Now let us look at a case of Canada for that matter, Quebec, Quebeco movement. This is an ongoing movement in the eastern Canadian province that arises from Quebec, being the only French majority, otherwise mostly an English-speaking country. And there is a demand to recognize Quebec. And however the government of Canada recognizes Quebec and English both as official languages. However, the sizable population and many separatists still demand a varying degree of autonomy including complete independence. So that movement that started as a language movement, linguistic movement, is still not over and there are demands and tension in Canada.

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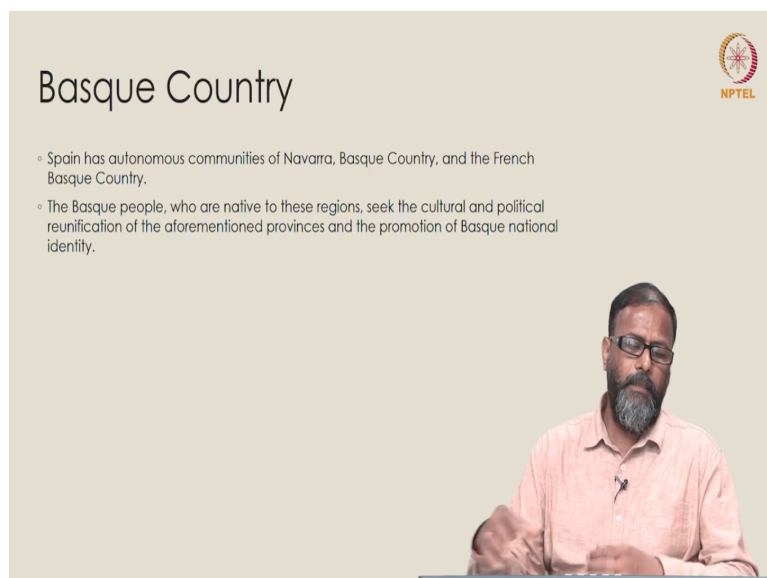
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Galicia

- The North-Westernmost autonomous community of Spain hails the recognition of the Galician nation as distinct from Castilian Spanish to a great extent.
- However, a vast majority of nationalists seek the reunification of Galicia with Portugal, with whom they feel a closer cultural and linguistic affinity.

In the case of Spain. Galatia the northwestern most autonomous community. It helps the recognition of the Galatian nation, as distinct from Castilian Spanish to a great extent and there is a linguistic conflict and there is a linguistic tension. A vast majority of nationalists seek the reunification of Galatia with Portugal, with whom they feel a closure culture and linguistic affinity.

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Basque Country

- Spain has autonomous communities of Navarra, Basque Country, and the French Basque Country.
- The Basque people, who are native to these regions, seek the cultural and political reunification of the aforementioned provinces and the promotion of Basque national identity.

Similarly Basque country, Spain has autonomous communities of Nevarra Basque country and French Basque country. And the Basque people, who are native to these regions, seek the cultural and political reunification of the aforementioned provinces and the promotion of

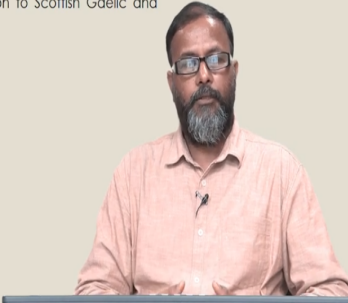
Basque national identity. And we have a linguistic tension and a movement going on for these demands.

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Scottish Gaelic and Scots

- There are two major and often opposing linguistic and political movements in Scotland for the recognition and promotion of Scottish as the national language.
- **Scottish Gaelic:** Closely related to Irish, the language is often simply called Gaelic.
- **Scots:** Scots is considered a dialect of English but some oppose by marking it as a distinct but closely related language. It stands in opposition to Scottish Gaelic and flares linguistic tension.
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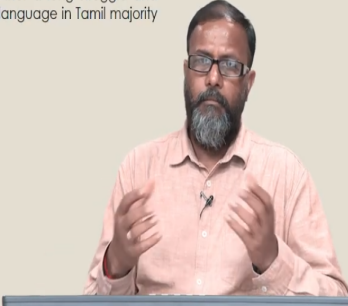
You know, other parts of the world, let us say Scotland. So Scottish Gaelic and Scots, there is a conflict and a tension between the two. So there are two major often opposing linguistic and political movements in Scotland, for the recognition of and promotion of Scottish as the national language. So Scottish Gaelic closely related to Irish. They are demanding it to be recognized as an official language. However Scots, which is considered as a variety of English or to some it is a closely related variety. So whatever the case is, it stands in opposition to Scottish Gaelic and there is a movement, there is a tension between the two.

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Sinhalese and Tamil

- Political unification of the Tamil-majority North and East with the rest of the island, which had a Sinhalese majority post colonial rule in Sri Lanka flared the issue of linguistic and ethnic conflict.
- A few decades later, Sinhalese replaced the neutral and foreign English as the sole official language of the island, while Tamil was excluded. After a long struggle and blood-shed finally, Tamil was included as the second official language in Tamil majority areas.



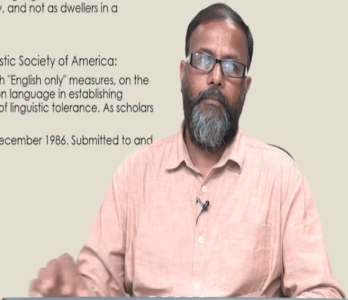
This is not alone because if you look at the struggle of Sinhalese and Tamil in Sri Lanka that is yet another case, where a linguistic conflict turned into an ethnic conflict and a political fight and years of bloodshed and no reconciliation activities followed after these conflicts and it continues. However after 2011, we can see peace and harmony being promoted in the region. So that is another case for you.

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English only Movement: USA

- The United States federal government does not specify an official language; however, all official documents in the U.S. are written in English, though some are also published in other languages.
- The **English-only movement**, also known as the **Official English movement**, is a political movement that advocates for the use of only the English Language in official affairs of the USA.
- In 1907, President Roosevelt said,
 - "We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American Nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house."
 - Roosevelt, Theodore, Works (Memorial ed., 1926), vol. XXIV, p. 554, New York.
- The modern English-only movement has met with rejection from the Linguistic Society of America:
 - ... **Be it therefore resolved** that the Society make known its opposition to such "English only" measures, on the grounds that they are based on misconceptions about the role of a common language in establishing political unity, and that they are inconsistent with basic American traditions of linguistic tolerance. As scholars with a professional interest in language...
 - ... Presented and approved at the USA Business Meeting in New York City, December 1986. Submitted to and passed by membership in a mail ballot, March 1987.
 - <http://www.usadc.org/info/iso-res-english.html>



Look at English only movement in the USA for that matter. It all started in the second half of the 18th century with immigration from different parts of Europe and Africa, hitting the shores of America. And then a lot of ethnic linguistic and you know nationality conflicts that


we see during that period. But I will not go into the detailed history of it. But English only movement also known as the official English movement in the USA. It is a political movement that advocates for the use of only English language in official affairs of the federal government of the United States. However, the United States of America federal government has not declared constitutionally any language as official language. It avoids societal multilingualism, to bring into official declaration. De facto English remains the language of administration and all affairs in America.

Just to give you a few perspectives, in 1907, President Roosevelt wrote. He said, we have room for but one language in this country and that is the English language for we intend to see that a crucible turns our people out as Americans of American nationality and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house. That is a very categorical remark he made about promoting English only in the United States. After the First World War, there was a protest against German as a language to be used in the United States. So Spanish for that matter, has an undercurrent and tension with English in the United States, Italian for that matter, but the modern English only movement has been opposed by a very powerful body Linguistic Society Of America, in its resolution it states. I quote from there.

Be it therefore resolved that the society that is my linguistic site of America make known its position to such English-only measures, on the grounds that they are based on misconceptions about the role of a common language in establishing political unity, and that they are inconsistent with basic American traditions of linguistic tolerance. As a scholar with a professional interest in language presented and approved at the Linguistic Society of America business meeting in New York City, December 1986. Submitted to and passed by membership in a mail ballot on March 1987.


So that is a clear resolve, not to promote and support this movement. However, undercurrent societal tensions and you know, language movements are still on, in some pockets, in some form, in the United States.

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Post Colonial Africa: Official Language(s)

- Owing to their colonial histories and a series of immigration for trade and labour market requirements, African societies are multi-racial multi-ethnic which govern their historical past and social composition.
- In post-colonial African Countries we witness an *endoglossic nature of Official Languages Provisions* where, the stated policies an indigenous language apart form a foreign language, making them a country with more than one official languages.



Looking at colonial Africa and if you look at their stated official language policy, if they also underline such existing linguistic tension and movements, language movements in the African continent. And you know, owing to their colonial histories and a series of immigrations for the sake of trade and demands of the labor market, multinationals, multi-ethnic populations shifted, migrated to African shores and African society is truly multiracial, multi-ethnic. And this multiplicity of ethnicity, language and race, govern their societal composition.

In post-colonial Africa, we see an endoglossic tendency of stating official languages. What is endoglossic? Endoglossic means when your official language is a native language. However they have an endoglossic official language plus the language of the colonizer or the foreign language like English, like (France) French. So most of the countries have endoglossic and a foreign language in their official languages, statutory languages policies. And the list is long. But what is important is to understand that in all multilingual societies, we have this tendency of undercurrents, demands and a kind of linguistic tension, which may be flared into a political, social movement. In India also, if you have 22 languages recognized in schedule 8, there are 38 languages, which are struggling to get into the list and many more are trying to be recognized and get the share in the public sphere. So this is, what is linguistic tension and language movements across the world. You can know more about it. You can try to find such studies and cases about a particular region.

Let us say Indonesia for that matter. Let us say Malaysia for that matter, let us say, Myanmar for that matter, Vietnam for that matter, other places and if you look at those countries, which have colonial history, you find it more permanently, 1950s onwards, we have seen a series of efforts and studies and interventions by governments, to state their official language policy, announced their illustrated language policy.

Why was there a need for language planning? Why was there a need for a stated language policy? Answer is prevailing linguistic tension and language movements and addressing the demands of the speakers of those languages, who wanted their share and push away some kind of hegemonic expansion of a particular language or a particular speech community. So this is it for now. We will meet in the next class with some more interesting themes and topics. Thank you very much.