A Profile of Danger and Development of the Languages of Europe

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Overview

- Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) as a means for assessing development versus endangerment of all the world’s languages
- European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) as a benchmark for language policy in Europe
- We use EGIDS to give a profile of the language situation in Europe and to explore the relationship between ECRML recognition and the status of languages
The basic premise of GIDS

- Language shift (ending in extinction) happens as a language loses functions in society.
- To reverse language shift, the community must work to bring those functions back.
The 13 levels of EGIDS


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wider communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Vigorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Moribund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Nearly Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dormant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EGIDS (Lewis & Simons 2010)

- A 13-level scale that expands on Fishman’s GIDS (1991) by increasing its scope and giving greater internal precision
- Enables us to provide an estimate of relative danger and development for every language
- EGIDS 6a (Vigorous) is taken as the unmarked “norm” of sustainable oral use that represents the dividing line between endangerment (EGIDS 6b –10) and development (EGIDS 0 – 5)
- Broad and shallow analysis complementing more focused and deeper investigation
Vitality Profiles by World Regions
Language status in Europe vs. Rest of world (as counts)

Europe

Rest of world

Number of Languages

n = 323

EGIDS Level

n = 7,157
Language status in Europe vs. Rest of world (as %s)

Europe

Rest of world

Percentage of Languages

EGIDS Level

0 1 2 3 4 5 6a 6b 7 8a 8b 9 10

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Language status by UN region (as counts)

- Northern Europe
- Southern Europe
- Western Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Western Asia

Number of Languages vs. EGIDS Level
Language status by UN region (as %s)
Status of ECRML in European states

- Dark green — Both signed and ratified
- Light green — Signed, but not ratified
- White — Neither signed nor ratified
- Gray — Not a member state

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Charter_for_Regional_or_Minority_Languages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Charter_for_Regional_or_Minority_Languages)
Language status in countries that have ratified ECRML vs. those that have not

![Diagram showing language status comparison between countries that have ratified ECRML and those that have not ratified.](chart.png)
Language status in countries that have ratified ECRML vs. those that have not (%)
Much more language endangerment where ECRML is not ratified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language status</th>
<th>ECRML is ratified</th>
<th>Not ratified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>41 (33%)</td>
<td>47 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing or Vigorous</td>
<td>58 (46%)</td>
<td>55 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In trouble, Dying, or Extinct</td>
<td>27 (21%)</td>
<td>92 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language status in ECRML countries
Which languages are recognized?

- Official languages (EGIDS 1,2) of other countries
  - 84% (99 of 118) are recognized vs. 40% (41 of 102) for other languages
  - 100% of those with a population over 250,000 are recognized
- 0% are recognized if the government considers them to be a dialect of the national language
  (= blue dots on the scatter plot)
Which languages are recognized?

- For languages not official in any country and not a dialect of the national language
  - 46% (41 of 90) are recognized with a greater preference for larger languages
    - 50,000 and higher: 60% (12 of 20) are recognized
    - Under 50,000: 41% (29 of 70) are recognized
  - And a greater preference for languages that are
    - written and vital
      » EGIDS 3–5: 57% (27 of 47) are recognized
      » EGIDS 6a–8b: 33% (14 of 43) are recognized
Language status in ECRML countries

ECRML Status:  
- Green: Recognized
- Blue: "Dialect"
- Red: Unrecognized

The diagram shows the relationship between EGIDS Level and L1 Population, with different percentages of languages recognized under these statuses.

- 84% recognized
- 57% recognized (excluding blue)
- 33% recognized
Summary & Conclusions

- The profile of Europe is unique, with a preponderance of developed and developing languages.
- Policy makes a difference in language maintenance and development though it is not by itself a sufficient cause.
- In spite of a policy focus on minority/minoritized languages, already Institutionalized languages receive more recognition than do less developed languages.
- The perilously endangered languages continue to receive less attention than needed.
- The EGIDS categories applied to the ECMRL recognitions are helpful in pointing out the tendency of governments to recognize the already strong and to fail to notice the weakest of the weak.
References


Thank You!

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