LANGUAGES IN CONTACT

FINDINGS AND PROBLEMS

by

URIEL WEINREICH

With a Preface by

ANDRÉ MARTINET

Sixth Printing

1968

MOUTON

THE HAGUE · PARIS
To do this, one might define as a **mother-tongue group** the class of all those people involved in a language-contact situation who learned one of the languages first. In a bilingual group, one would accordingly expect to find two mother-tongue groups, and perhaps an intermediate set of persons who actually learned both languages simultaneously.

The characteristic use of languages in various functions should preferably be described separately for each mother-tongue group, not merely for the bilingual community as a whole. This additional breakdown might show, for example, that the burden of bilingualism is borne entirely by one of the mother-tongue groups, while the other group expects to be addressed in its own language in all cases of intergroup communication. Thus in a French-Schwyzerdütsch bilingual village like Meyriez (near Murten, Switzerland), the bilinguals belong predominantly to the Schwyzerdütsch mother-tongue group; few native French speakers learn Schwyzerdütsch at all. It may furthermore appear from this additional analysis that though a community is bilingual, it contains only one mother-tongue group; the other language may not be spoken natively by anyone. The functional division between the languages is then uniform for the entire bilingual community. Such is the case in German Switzerland, where the population is generally bilingual (Schwyzerdütsch and Standard German), but the mother-tongue is exclusively Schwyzerdütsch. Standard German is functionally restricted to written usage, to formal (monologic) discourse, and to subject matter technical in nature (cf. p. 81). The absence of a significant Standard German mother-tongue group deprives the language of that resistance to interference with which a group of native speakers would endow it. Ashkenazic Hebrew, which in its millenarian contact with Yiddish was largely limited in function to liturgical use and rabbinical literature and correspondence, was not represented by a mother-tongue group, either, and experienced profound interference as a consequence, splitting up dialectally in its phonology as Yiddish did; Just as the word for ‘year’ appears in some Yiddish dialects as *jor* and as *jür* in others, Hebrew ‘blessed art Thou’ corresponds to *borux atu* or *burux atu*, according to the area.

The psychological importance of priority of learning thus has a concomitant on the sociolinguistic plane. It is the importance to a language of being represented by a sizable mother-tongue group in a contact situation.

### 4.3 Congruence of Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Divisions

In any concrete contact situation, the division between mother-tongue groups is usually congruent with one or more other divisions of a non-linguistic nature. Some of these are outlined in the present section, with the stress on such factors as may be relevant to the stimulation or inhibition of interference.

#### 4.31 Types of Congruence

1. **Geographic Areas.** Among the most common parallels to the division between mother-tongue groups is a geographic line. Unless it coincides with high

---

*Grootaers (182) terms this “stylistic bilingualism,” as distinct from “social bilingualism,” where two mother-tongue groups are involved.*
mountains, seas, or other physical obstacles, there is likely to be contact between the mother-tongue groups across the line, and hence bilingualism.\textsuperscript{7} Language contact along many European language borders has been described in great detail, and data are available on the extent of bilingualism for every community in those areas.\textsuperscript{8} It appears that if the geographic division is clearcut, especially in rural surroundings, the language contact tends to be rather restricted. The purpose of intergroup communication in such cases is mainly trade,\textsuperscript{9} whether the geographic line is a county boundary or an ocean. For example, the German-language part of the Sarine valley, canton of Fribourg (Switzerland), “is oriented predominantly westward [because] economic and social intercourse with the [French-language] Pays d’Enhaut, . . . the Ormont Valley, and its market center, Aigle, is more important than that with the [German-language] Simmental.”\textsuperscript{10}

Consequently, the relations between mother-tongue groups are fluid and limited in scope. There is a great turnover of interlocutors; the means used to communicate are frequently improvised. Although interference in speech is likely to be quite heavy, it is not apt to be habitualized. On the other hand, since language contact congruent with area contact involves travel into a strange environment, new things are likely to be encountered and their names adopted. Sporadic lexical borrowing is therefore to be expected.

In one type of congruent language-and-area division, the intergroup contact is more developed: in isolated enclaves, such as the so-called language “islands” (\textit{Sprachinseln}) of pre-war Europe or the rural immigrant settlements of the Americas. There the population is dependent on the surrounding area in proportion to its isolation from its own hinterland or homeland, and interference can accordingly be expected to be more profound. In the study of German-language enclaves in Eastern Europe, the precise nature of the relations with the new environment as a determinant or interference has been carefully considered.\textsuperscript{11}

The congruence of language and area may be disturbed even in rural communities, especially if located precisely on a language border;\textsuperscript{12} in city surround-

\textsuperscript{7} The role of physical obstacles in the cultural and linguistic isolation of German ethnic enclaves in Slovakia has been graphically portrayed by Kuhn (291).

\textsuperscript{8} Cf. Draye (127), D handjob (120), and Valkhoff (588) on the French-Flemish border in Belgium, Lévy (310) on Alsace-Lorraine, Zimmerli (657) on the German-French border in Switzerland, Waltershausen (606) on the German-Romanian line, Bock (58) on German and Danish in Central Schleswig, Kloss (276) on a section of the German-Dutch language border.

\textsuperscript{9} In Switzerland, the population of a village sometimes also crosses the language border to a neighboring community to attend church services, e.g. the German-speaking Catholics of the village of La Scheulte; cf. Wartburg (607), 158.

\textsuperscript{10} Steiner (546), 31, footnote 13.

\textsuperscript{11} See Kuhn (290); also Fritzwald (422), Mackensen (331).

\textsuperscript{12} For example, Wallenried near Murten, Switzerland, described by Weinreich (624), 233-5. Concerning the cartographic problems created by blurred language borders, cf. Pfaundler (403), Sieger (518), and Sidaritsch (517), as well as the Styrian map by Schmidt and Neumann (487), where the new principles are utilized; cf. also Weinreich (624), 521., 100, 103.
ings, an unblurred language border is quite unusual. In the bilingual (French and German) Swiss city of Biel, for example, no topographical language border appears to exist. But of course there are exceptions. A city like Fribourg (Switzerland) is divided: In the lowest quarter (German Au, French Auge), inhabited mostly by German speakers, the signs are in German, the police officials and the salespeople are all conversant with German. While the entire upper portion of the city is French, the lower city enjoys a certain amount of linguistic (German) autarky. It is hardly surprising, then, that such widespread interference of French and German as is reported from Biel is not typical of Fribourg.

There remains a need for precise sociolinguistic studies of bilingual urban communities, since it is evident that linguistically unnukeated cities are foci of the most extensive and intimate interlingual contacts, both in the Old World and the New.

(2) Indigenousness. The geographic separation of two mother-tongue groups may be canceled by migration, but a movement of one of the two groups seems frequently to result in a new characteristic socio-cultural division not without typical linguistic effects of its own. The immigrant language, rather than the indigenous one, appears to be the more exposed to interference for at least the following reasons: (a) The novelty of the habitat creates a need among the immigrants for adequate new vocabulary (cf. §2.43, p. 59); (b) The social and cultural disorientation of the immigrants undermines their inertial resistance to excessive borrowing into their language; (c) Since many immigrant groups have a significantly low proportion of women among them, the necessity for intermarriage leads to a discontinuity of linguistic tradition. Bilingual Arizona, where there are both fresh Spanish-speaking immigrants and indigenous Spanish-speaking "Old Families," represents a curious test case for these hypotheses. And indeed, while the "Old Families" maintain their Spanish—with a preference for Standard Spanish—in the face of the ascendancy of English, the immigrants and their children, anxious to speak English, are generally negligent about their native Spanish. Spanish as an immigrant language thus suffers considerably greater interference from English than Spanish as a coterritorial, indigenous tongue.

(3) Cultural or Ethnic Groups. In a great majority of contacts between groups speaking different mother-tongues, the groups constitute, at the same time, distinct ethnic or cultural communities. Such contact entails biculturalism (participation in two cultures) as well as bilingualism, diffusion of cultural traits as well as of linguistic elements.

13 Detailed house-to-house inquiries might, however, reveal varying concentrations of mother-tongue groups.
14 Kuenzi (289).
15 Cf. the correlated studies of urban social structure and acculturation outlined by Caplow (95).
16 See Willems (642), 463; (640), 320 on German immigrants in Brazil.
17 Barker (18), 169f.
18 Some exceptions are discussed in §4.32.
19 See Barker (18) on the biculturality of children growing up in Tucson, Arizona.
Situations of congruent culture-and-language contact seem to invite interference of a lexical-cultural type (cf. pp. 56ff.). The relationship of the cultures to one another in a particular geographic habitat determines what one group learns from the other and defines such gaps in the vocabulary of each group as may need filling by borrowing. Even for extensive word transferring, large numbers of bilingual speakers need not be involved and the relative size of the groups is not necessarily a factor; after all, "there is no intrinsic reason [to assume] that, when a large and a small group are brought into contact, the small group will borrow more extensively than the large one. . . . A hundred individuals can learn a new thing as readily as one." 20

Culture contact naturally produces the diffusion of non-material as well as of material culture elements. The non-material side of culture is particularly significant in explaining not only the borrowing of abstract vocabulary, but the principles of selectivity and rejection of vocabulary. Cultural resistance long delayed the adoption by Islam of gambling, insurance, or printing. 21 Resistance of a similar type apparently led the Ashkenazic Jews to avoid the adoption from medieval German of the word for 'Saturday,' 22 (even though the names for the other six days of the week were borrowed), and also to leave out from the large German vocabulary they did accept such words as tugent 'virtue', laster 'vice', buge 'penance', and others with specifically Christian connotations. 23

(4) RELIGION. One kind of cultural difference, namely a religious one, quite often coincides—alone or in combination with others—with a mother-tongue division. In many Ukrainian towns before World War I, for example, the mother-tongue division between Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish coincided with the religious division between Uniates, Catholics, and Jews. Similarly, for the Germans in the ethnic enclaves of Eastern Europe, the German mother-tongue and the Lutheran religion "were the same thing." 24 In Switzerland, the author had occasion to observe bilingual communities in which the mother-tongue division coincides with no other cultural difference except the denominational one. Several villages around Murten, for instance, have German and French mother-tongue groups which are exclusively Protestant and Catholic, respectively. The religious division acts as an even greater barrier to the integration of the communes than the linguistic one, so that in the bilingual but unireligious communes the contact of the two mother-tongue groups is considerably more intimate. A villager as a rule is more conscious of his neighbor’s denomination than of his mother-tongue. Not only is intermarriage quite rare, but everyday activities, too, are separated according to denominations. Thus, in the village of

20 Linton (312), 499.
21 Kroeber (287), 417f.
22 German Samstag or Sonnabend, Yiddish šabes.
24 Karasek-Lück (258), describing the Germans of Volynia. In Catholic Brazil, according to Willems (642, 460), Protestant families are emotionally more attached to their German mother-tongue than Catholic German immigrants. See the special study on religion and mother-tongue by Grentrup (180).
Courtaman there are two inns: a Protestant and a Catholic one. A surprising amount of linguistic self-sufficiency and unilingualism is possible in a denominationally divided bilingual village like Wallenried (pop. 265; 51% of French mother-tongue). Some children there grow up without having to learn the other language; as many as 41% of the native Schwyzertütsch speakers and 79% of the native French speakers were found to be unilingual in this village. While there are mixed play groups of pre-school age (the common language is French), the Protestants and Catholics have separate schools. The contacts even within the village are thus quite restricted. The use of each language is rather specialized according to interlocutors, and in intergroup contact it is most restricted topically, but each language is used in all functions within the mother-tongue group. This considerably limits the possibilities of interference. The division of schools on linguistic-denominational lines exposes most children of both mother-tongues to the standardizing, conservatory influences on their language that emanate from the school as well as from the church. The results of any interference that does take place are thus additionally checked and eliminated.

The restricting effect on language contact and interference exercised by religious differences, especially in rural areas, should never be lost sight of. Some of the language borders in Europe which are more recent than religious borders represent lines where a language shift came to a standstill at a religious divide. This phenomenon, too, can be observed in Switzerland at present. The Germanization of Romansh villages along the Rhine above Chur, originating from largely Protestant areas, has skipped the solidly Catholic Domat/Ems and Rhäzüns, but is engulfing such Protestant points as Trins, Flims, or Rothenbrunnen. On the contrary, the Protestantism of the Müstair Valley helps to protect it from the threat of Germanization proceeding from the neighboring Catholic valley of the Lower Engadine. The denominational border is in both instances a barrier to the progress of the language shift.

(5) Race. The congruence of race and mother-tongue differences seems significant only to the extent that in some situations the racial division reinforces the bars to intermarriage and thus to the earliest and most intimate kind of home bilingualism. In Brazil, for example, the recognizable racial difference has prevented Brazilian-Japanese intermarriage much more effectively than Brazilian-German mixed marriages.

(6) Sex. While certain differences in language style according to the sex of the speaker are not uncommon, major language divisions coinciding with the sex difference are rare. The most famous case is probably the remnant of such a division in the Antilles which originated from the capture of Arawak-speaking

---

15 Details in Weisler (624), 233--5.
16 See the special study by Cornish (107).
17 Weiers (624), 277; Gadola (155), 147; Waltershausen (606).
18 The separatistic effect of religious differences is sometimes great enough to support the crystallization of new languages in contact situations; cf. §4.6.
19 Willen (641), 105; (640), 451--61.
20 Cf. Tagliavini (562); Jespersen (250), 237ff.
women by a predatory Carib-speaking tribe. The contact between the sex
groups is of course so extensive that no such major difference can be long main-
tained. On the other hand, the tagging of selected speech features as feminine or
masculine makes them, in some cultures, highly immune to transfer to the speech
of the other sex.

Occasionally one of the sexes may be more exposed to contact with a second
language. In Macedonia, for example, Aromanian women are reported to be
largely unilingual, while their husbands are bi- and multi-lingual.

(7) Age. A congruence between mother-tongue groups and age groups is the
synchronic manifestation of what is, diachronically seen, a language shift
(see also §4.7).

A language shift is hardly ever so abrupt as to sever communication between
age groups. What appears like a discrete generational difference in mother-
tongues within a single family is a projection of a more gradual age-and-language
transition in the community. It can be assumed that the same reasons that lead
an age group to shift to a new language usually compel its elders at least to
learn that language. Thus language shifts are almost invariably preceded by
widespread bilingualism. Whether they are also followed by bilingualism, i.e.
a lingering knowledge of the obsolescent language, seems to differ from case to
case. Unfortunately census evidence is usually only inferential. It is known, for
example, that among the descendants of German immigrants, the percentage of
American-born persons of American parentage who gave German as a mother-
tongue was 18.7% according to the 1940 census (587); among Swedish immigrants
the corresponding figure was only 4.1%. If there is a positive correlation between
the proportion of an ethnic group which passes on its language to its children
as a mother-tongue, and the total proportion which teaches its children the
language, then the knowledge of the obsolescent old-country language can be
assumed to have been about $4\frac{1}{2}$ times as widespread in the German group as
among the Swedish.

Whether the burden of bilingualism is borne by the group as a whole or to a
greater degree by one part of it seems to depend both on the suddenness of the
shift and the point to which it has progressed. In American immigrant families,
for example, the children usually learn English most rapidly and in the early
period it is they who switch back to the old-country tongue in communication
with their elders. A generation later the grandchildren are often unilingual

31 Müller (379), II, 322–49; Jespersen (250), 237ff.
32 See Jespersen, ibid.; Avanesov (13), 238; cf. also Capidan (90, 127–32) on the Rumanians
of Albania, whose unilingual women had somewhat different phonetics from those of the
plurilingual men; and Lévy (308) on certain lexical differences between men’s and women’s
speech in Yiddish.
33 See Récatas (431).
34 In the Swiss area of a Romantsch-to-German shift, this author was able to establish
statistically the decreasing percentage of persons of Romantsch mother-tongue in progres-
sively lower age groups (624, 344–7).
35 Selk (513) utilized the different language-usage habits of generations to measure the
process of Danish-to-German shift in Schleswig.
English and it is the parents and grandparents who must switch languages in deference to their interlocutors.

An obsolescent language seems destined to acquire peculiar connotations and to be applied in special functions even after it has lost its main communicative role. Under a rapidly progressing language shift it acquires a certain esoteric value.36 On the other hand, the first generation to undergo the shift tends to learn enough of the obsolescent language to destroy this value; thus, many children of American immigrants "know" just enough of the old folks' language to understand what the parents mean to conceal. Obsolescent languages also easily develop comic associations. Patois columns in French Swiss newspapers or Pennsylvania-German sections in certain Pennsylvania journals are mainly restricted to humorous material. Among children of American immigrants, the mere utterance of a word in their parents' language easily evokes laughter.37

The stylistic specialization of an obsolescent language and the association of it with intimate childhood experiences is conducive to the borrowing of its lexical elements into the younger people's speech, especially in discourse that is informal and uninhibited by pretensions of high social status. Particularly apt to be transferred are colorful idiomatic expressions, difficult to translate, with strong affective overtones, whether endearing, pejorative, or mildly obscene.38 Correspondingly, the "new" language is likely to be viewed by members of the older age group as the epitome of fashion. This may lead, in turn, to heavy borrowing in the opposite direction designed to make utterances sound more youthful, modern, or elegant. In Brazil, for example, highly mixed speech has been found to be a phase in the transition of Germans from their native language to Portuguese.39 It would be a worthwhile problem in sociolinguistics to determine the correlation between obsolescence of a language and the extent of interference in it.

(8) Social Status. While a difference in social status is often a concomitant of other group divisions (cultural, religious, indigenous vs. immigrant), situations of stable language contact in which the mother-tongue difference corresponds to a difference in the social status of two autochthonous groups, and to nothing else, are easier to imagine than to discover. One such case is reported from Java, where the nobility speaks Noko natively, while the commoners' mother-tongue is Kromo.40 In Ireland, according to one opinion, Gaelic long

36 A Swiss woman in an area that had shifted to French, when asked by an investigator to speak patois, said: "Why? Are there too many ears hearing us?" Cf. Gauchat (159), 25. See also Seliščev (506, 37) on the esoteric functions of Chuvash and Cheremis in areas where they are becoming obsolete.

37 Related to this is the fact observed by Swadesh (558, 234) that "once the new language is widely adopted, there are certain groups and personalities that persist especially in retaining the old language."

38 For Amer. Yiddish examples, see p. 35, footnote 21.

39 Willems (640), 315. Rosenquist (453) notes similarly how Swedish in the United States, before being replaced, is influenced by English.

40 Pieris (400), 330.
survived among the lower strata without appearing in the historical records produced by representatives of the autochthonous upper classes.\textsuperscript{41}

In conditions of a language shift, however, some socially distinct groups often lead the rest of the population, so that a congruence between mother-tongue and social status can be traced, even if it is only transitional. Thus in many German cities and English rural areas all but the lowest stratum have shifted from the local dialects to the standard language.\textsuperscript{42} Similarly, the shift to Portuguese among German immigrants in Brazil has been more rapid among the middle and upper classes than among the lowest.\textsuperscript{43} Whether the determinant here is the greater cultural conservatism or the more limited social goals of some strata, a differentiated reaction to a new language is produced. As for socially differentiated resistance to a shift, cf. §4.42.

What the foreseeable linguistic effects of a stable status-and-language division are is difficult to say because of the scarcity of pertinent evidence, although it is to be expected that the familiar diffusion from the upper to the lower stratum accompanied by a trickling of slang expressions upward, which is characteristic of all linguistic innovations, will ensue. In situations of language shift, heavy interference as a forerunner of the shift is apparently so general (see p. 95) that it is hardly dependent on social differentiation. To subject a slow language shift, preferably in socially differentiated urban surroundings, to close sociolinguistic study seems a prerequisite to the elucidation of the phenomena involved.

(9) Occupation. Occasionally special occupational groups have languages of their own, e.g. the tailors of Saracatsana in Macedonia\textsuperscript{44} or the Jewish cattle merchants of Alsace.\textsuperscript{45} These are borderline cases, of course; it is not even always clear whether the special languages differ from the general language in more than certain sections of the vocabulary. Yet, because of the esoteric function of the special occupational languages, their value depends on the restriction of the group of initiates. Here, then, is a rare situation in which there is resistance to interference on the part of the speakers of the source language, a reluctance to "lend" rather than to borrow.\textsuperscript{46} Only occasionally do individual words penetrate into general slang.

(10) Rural vs. Urban Population. Among the non-linguistic groupings which sometimes coincide with mother-tongue differences in language contact situations, the urban-rural distinction perhaps deserves mention as a unique combination of social, occupational, and topographic differences. The linguistic diffusion proceeding from urban centers to the surrounding countryside has been

\textsuperscript{41} Pokorny (412).
\textsuperscript{42} Henzen (213), 182-6; Bloomfield (55), 51.
\textsuperscript{43} Willems (642), 452f. See also Heberle (207).
\textsuperscript{44} Capidan (91); Suli (555); Georgacae (165). Similar linguistic formations have been found by Keller (263a) in Ticino, Switzerland.
\textsuperscript{45} Their cryptic language, an outgrowth of Western Yiddish, is called by them Lošlekkouš. It will be described by this author in a forthcoming paper.
\textsuperscript{46} In the field of acculturation, reluctance to "lend" due to the nature of the cultural item is illustrated by such phenomena as monopolies, patents, secret diplomacy; cf. Devereux and Loeb (119), 134f.
repeatedly demonstrated by dialectologists, especially the Marburg school of Wrede’s (651) and by Frings (9). This diffusion would seem likely to take place not only when sporadic innovations are spread to similar dialects, but even when the city has shifted to a new language.

Rural populations sometimes develop a hostile attitude (or at least an ambivalent one) toward their urban centers; the effect of this on language shifts is mentioned in §4.71. Whether anti-urban attitudes can prevent the diffusion of linguistic interference phenomena short of a shift remains to be determined by empiric sociolinguistic investigation.

4.32 Lack of Congruent Non-Linguistic Divisions

There are some instances of language contact in which the language division does not correspond to any congruent non-linguistic divisions. A number of them are observable in Switzerland. After various culture patterns in their geographic distribution had been subjected to intensive study, little connection was found there between language and patterns of dress, food, games, or customs. On close scrutiny, such differences as exist, for example, between the spinning and weaving methods of the German and French Valais turn out not to be strictly congruent with the language frontier.47 Switzerland generally has been discovered to be culturally divided not at the French-German language border, but by a line running further east through German-language territory, along the mountains Brünig and Napf and the rivers Reuss and Aare. While “it cannot be denied that individual, literary culture is associated for the most part with the geographic domains of the respective written languages . . ., folk culture often follows other divides—older ones, perhaps—than the ones between contemporary ‘national’ languages.”48 A preliminary examination by this author of unpublished materials of the Atlas of Swiss Folk Culture (160) failed to reveal any consistent cultural difference which could be connected geographically with the division between German and French or Romansh.

Again, in studying the status of the bilingual Swiss Raetoromans (i.e. Romansh speakers), this author tried to evaluate the content of the Raetoromans’ group consciousness. It turned out that “ethnic” interpretations of the group’s identity were secondary to linguistic considerations, if they entered the picture at all. A Raetoroman of German mother-tongue is impossible by definition. The Romansh as well as the Schwyzertütsch speakers consider themselves members of the Swiss nation (Volk or Nation; pievel, nazium), and more immediately of the Grison people (Bündnervolk, pievel grischun) and its culture. Only a few informants thought in terms of a Raetoroman Volk. In the struggle to resist the language shift, Raetoroman leadership hardly makes use of even the few existing differences in folkways, folk art, or folklore that could be emphasized to raise the Raetoromans’ group solidarity. The competition between the languages has no overtones of an ethnic or social conflict.

A similar linguistically mixed area in Southern Hungary where the ethnic

47 Bodmer (60), 96ff.
48 Weiss (630), 154.
division between Germans, Hungarians, and Slovenes had become quite blurred was described by Werner (633). Other groups that have been characterized as ethnically indifferent are the inhabitants of Polesie, who called themselves neither Poles nor Russians, but merely tutejši ‘local people’, and the “Blakkede” people in the German-Danish borderlands.  

The absence of socio-cultural divisions to reinforce the difference in mother-tongues is not only a factor facilitating language shifts but it probably also deters the development of resistance to linguistic interference, and is thus conducive to interlingual influence.

4.33 Conclusion

In the analysis of what makes one of two languages dominant for a bilingual individual, the multiplicity of contributing elements was pointed out (§3.38). The discussion of congruent linguistic and socio-cultural divisions in the preceding section of the present chapter underscores the difficulty of determining in some cases which language is “upper” or “dominant” in the bilingual community. The very breakdown of communities into mother-tongue groups gives rise to the question: Dominant for whom? Clearly each mother-tongue group can rate the two languages independently and with different results. It is doubtful altogether whether it is worth tagging two languages in contact as respectively “upper” and “lower” at any cost, since from the point of view of interference studies, various relations between mother-tongue groups are likely to have different characteristic effects on the languages in contact.

The difficulty of ranking two mother-tongue groups in hierarchical order is aggravated by the need to rank functions of the languages as well. It is therefore expedient, perhaps, to restrict the term dominant to languages in contact situations where the difference in mother-tongues is coupled with a significant difference in social status (§4.36). But this should not imply, of course, that even there the direction of interference is exclusively from the dominant language to the non-dominant one. In Southern Welsh dialects, for example, two phonemes, /u:/ and /i/, have been progressively merged (a case of underdifferentiation in the terminology of §2.21) despite the fact that the variety of the language which maintained the distinction was of “higher prestige.” Similarly, Baltic German, as noted in §2.21, was influenced by the socially lower Lettish and Estonian. In many contact situations the languages would have to be called neutral with respect to dominance or non-dominance.

49 Selk (513). Cf. also Beck (35).
50 The term would then be the counterpart to “prestige,” i.e. the value of a language as a means of social advance (cf. p. 79, footnote 34). This terminology would accord with Bloomfield’s distinction (55, 461) between “the upper or dominant language, spoken by the conquering or otherwise more privileged group, and the lower language, spoken by the subject people, or, as in the United States, by humble immigrants.” Needless to say, the implications drawn by Bloomfield from this distinction would be qualified by a more refined sociolinguistic analysis.
51 Sommerfelt (533), 96.
The social functions of languages (§4.2) and the congruence of mother-tongue with non-linguistic group differences (§4.3) are worth describing not because they permit a simple ranking of the languages, but rather because the various modi vivendi create typical patterns of linguistic behavior and interference or resistance to interference.

4.4 The Standardized Language as a Symbol

4.41 Sources of Language Loyalty

The sociolinguistic study of language contact needs a term to describe a phenomenon which corresponds to language approximately as nationalism corresponds to nationality. The term LANGUAGE LOYALTY has been proposed for this purpose. A language, like a nationality, may be thought of as a set of behavior norms; language loyalty, like nationalism, would designate the state of mind in which the language (like the nationality), as an intact entity, and in contrast to other languages, assumes a high position in a scale of values, a position in need of being "defended." Language loyalty, like nationalism, can be "an idée-force which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and sentiments and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organized action."\(^{55}\) In response to an impending language shift, it produces an attempt at preserving the threatened language (cf. §4.7);\(^{56}\) as a reaction to interference, it makes the standardized version of the language a symbol and a cause. Language loyalty might be defined, then, as a principle—its specific content varies from case to case—in the name of which people will rally themselves and their fellow speakers consciously and explicitly to resist changes in either the functions of their language (as a result of a language shift) or in the structure or vocabulary (as a consequence of interference). Thus in the field of sociolinguistics purism, standardization, language loyalty, and related defensive mechanisms are phenomena of major importance requiring systematic treatment, even if, for understandable reasons, they are considered irrelevant in descriptive structural linguistics.

What are the roots of language loyalty? One would suspect that a rudiment of this feeling is natural in every user of language, because the inescapable emo-

\(^{55}\) Kohn (282), 19, in a reference to nationalism.

\(^{56}\) Occasionally language loyalty can even be made subservient to aggressive purposes. Recent European history abounds in attempts to impose languages on populations by force. But there have also been grotesque attempts to modify languages (without displacing them) by ukase. The Russians have toyed with the idea of changing certain forms of Slavic languages in Soviet-occupied countries. For example, after invading Poland in 1939 they found the fact that 'Jew' was called in Polish Żyd distasteful, since žid in Russian is a term of contempt. Consequently, they ordered Polish newspapers to write J ewraj, coined on the model of the non-pejorative Russian jewraj. After World War II, the Russian occupation authorities in Poland again felt misgivings about the use of pan as a pronoun of polite address, since pan also means (in Russian as well as in Polish) 'squire', and was found to be an inappropriate remnant of feudalism in a People's Democracy; see Klemensiewicz (274).