A Short Review: Right Time to Talk About 'Effect of Covid-19 Outbreak on Languages'

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ABSTRACT: The survival of any language truly associated with the survival of its speaker. Languages are known to rule on the basis of their number of speakers.This review article aimed to provide ideas about some extinct as well as dead languages and also focus on the reason and factors of language death. However, the major aim of the review was to explore language death in the aspect of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Wedescribed the effect of COVID-19 on languages, as the infection spread rapidly throughout the world and settled a public health emergency by an ongoing increase in death rate.This study concluded, that a Pandemic situation i-e COVID-19 can have adverse effects on languages, leading towards language death.
KEYWORDS:COVID-19, Language death, Endangered Languages

I. INTRODUCTION

Language death is considered same as human death because when the last speaker of a language dies language also dies. Today there are around six to seven thousand languages in the world but the appalling part isat the end of the 21st century nearly half of the languages would have died(Baba Zanna Isa, 2014). It is predicted that half of the world's languages in danger of dying and after every two weeks or so a language diesoff in the world(Crystal, 2000).One study stated that 51 languages throughout the world known to beleft with one speaker only, 3 languages in South America, 6 in Asia, 3 in Pacific Ocean Islands, 28 in Australia, 8 in the USA, and 3 languages in Africa. Today, in the world about 1500 languages have less than 1000 speaker. In the world, about 500 languages are known to have below100 speakers. Nearly 3000 languages are spoken by almost 10,000 speakers. There are 500 languages in the world having up to 100,000 speakers(William Cuppy).

It has been reported that nearly 4 percent of the world'spopulation speaksabout 96 percent of the world's languages(Gehring, 2014).One research concluded that theimportance of language is directly proportional to the number of speakers. Lately, a lot of languages spoken by plenty of speakers so it's hard for a language to live with few speakers(Almurashi).

Despite all these facts, the death of a language not only influence the people of deadlanguage community but also a great loss for linguistics. According to the 23rd edition of (Ethnologue2020), today in the world 7,117 languages are known to be spoken by people throughout the world.

As we learn more about language day by day this number is in fluctuation and apart from this phenomenon, languages themselves are in constant fluctuation. It has been estimated that almost 40 percent (2926) of languages are endangered and among these 40 percent mostly languages are left with only less than 1,000 speakers. Meantime, only 23 languages spoken by half of the globe's population.

Additionally, 40.71 percent of languages are endangered due to different reasons, 51.23 of percent languages are in stable condition and 8.06 percent languages are institutional (Ethnologue2020). Recently, the world encountered a new fatal disease that startsspreading from "Wuhan" a city of China in December 2019. The disease-causing agent was known to be named as novel corona virus-2019 (nCOVID-19). By killing more than 20 lac individuals by 26 April, this disease has settled a public health emergency by WHO.

This article aimed to discuss theeffects of COVID-19 on language, which may be leading factors towards language death.

LANGUAGE DEATH

Language death has same kind of interpretation as the death of a person. A language dies when the last speaker of a language dies. Today, no one is learning Latinlanguage as a native language (Baba Zanna Isa, 2014).For example, At the end of 1995, Bruce Connell was busy in fieldwork in the Mambila region of

Cameroon west Africa. While working in the field he came to know that there's a language kasabe left with only one speaker named Bogon.Connell cannot collect enough knowledge about "Kasabe"on that tour so he decided to come later after one year. In mid-November, he went to collect more material about'Kasabe" and he came to know that Bogon died on 5th of November(Crystal, 2000).

Here we can see on 4th of November "Kasabe" language existed but on 6th November "Kasabe' died with the death of its last speaker.

Another interesting case of language death is most languages spoken by the Arawak people of theCaribbean, who disappeared within a generation of their first encounterwith Christopher Columbus. But such cases are relativelyrare(Crawford, 1995).

In case, if a language has only one speaker it means language is going to die soon while if a language has no speaker at present considered as a dead language(David Crystal, 2000).

Many years ago, a linguist went into the small village of Turkey HaciOsman in order to record the TevficEsence who was the last speaker of the Ubykhlanguage. He cannot even transfer his language to children because they already become Turkish language speaker. He wanted to write his name on gravestone so he already wrote it because hewas the only one who can speak this language. With the death of TevficEsenceUbykh language also included in the list of extinct languages(Baba Zanna Isa, 2014).

ENDANGERED LANGUAGE
When people start using and teaching more dominant language to their children their native language becomes endangered. Consequently, endangered language left with only a few speakers and it becomes hard to get knowledge about them. Whereas, the last speaker of those languages may die without any public record (Ethnologue 2020).

FACTORS AFFECTING THE LANGUAGE DEATH
1- Language Shift- due to political, cultural, economic dominance when people stop using their native or local language and start learning more dominant language. Such as Ainu, Manx, Sorbian, Quechua and so on.
2- Natural Disasters- for example earthquake, tsunami, disease (Such as Malol, Papua New Guinea (Earthquake) Andaman Islands (tsunami).
3- Human Disasters- for instance warfare, genocide for instance Tasmania (Genocide by Colonist) El Salvador (Civil War).
4- Political disasters for example education, migration, colonization.

II. COVID-19 MAY LEAD TO LANGUAGE DEATH
Corona viruses (CoVs) generally considered as non-lethal and known to cause common colds, but this century the world has three deadlyencounters with the pathogens from CoV family (SARS, 2003), (MERS,2012) and COVID-19, 2019 (Catharine, Hilary, & Anthony, 2020).

After spreading the infection globally, the disease is still evolving, and the final depth of severity can't be determined (Yi, Lagniton, Ye, Li, & Xu, 2020). WHO reportedtotal death 205175 by 26 April2020.

It was reported that the reason for language death is associated with the accelerated death rate of the human population in a community that might be combined with the outbreakof any epidemic or natural catastrophic events for example earthquake, flood(Wurm, 1991). Similarly reported by (Crawford, 1995)

Secondly, the spread of infectious diseases in human populations, who don't have adequate ability to resist the disease or don't have already developed immunity. Such kind of infectious diseases has a noticeable impact on indigenous peoples and their languages. For Instance, when European Enter in America 90% of the native population passed away due to illness that they contracted from Europe and their livestock(Crystal, 2000).

Currently, the world is exposed to severe COVID-19 infection, which spread so fast and killed a large number of individuals, and still killing without any check. The matter of our discussion is that this large death rate may lead to the death of some rare dialects, and may even lead to the death of language itself.

The severity of a pandemic lies in the fact that it is new to humans (immunity not developed) and its mode of transmission. There is nothing more contagious than a disease which can transfer by human contact. On 20th January 2020, COVID-19 infection was transferred to the para-medical staff, which confirmed its human to human transmission (Guan et al., 2020), leading to public health emergency by WHO on 30th January 2020.

One study reported that there is a significant effect of COVID-19 on age as an elder person has more and more risk to develop COVID-19 and the risk increased in the age above 50. The reason may lie in the fact that older age persons may already have developed many diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic disorders which have weaken their immunity. As a result, linguists are worried as older people preyed by COVID-19, most of the local dialects are only spoken by older people (for example parents and grandparents) and these dialects are not handed to the next generation as a native language.

For example, most of the Italian local dialects were endangered these dialects were at risk of extinction because of language shift towards Italian. Local languages gradually decreasing. These dialects are according to Berruto's calculations based on the data of the available ISTAT and DOXA (Institute for Statistical Research and Analysis of Public Opinion) surveys only little Italian populations still use their dialects at the end of this Century (Holtus & Radtke, 1994).

In Italy, Due to this infectious disease death rate reaches to 26,644 till date 26 April. So, we are not sure with this high death rate as people die language dialect may die because there's few speakers left of few local dialects.

A large majority of Native American languages are only spoken by elders and the remaining languages arefastly approached the same status as the new generations only learning English as their mother tongue (Crawford, 1995).

One study estimated that young native American's grow up speaking only English. InOkhlahoma out of 23 local languages only two languages are being learned by children and all California's 31 indigenous languages are moribund and out of these only 22 are spoken by asmall group of elders. In Washington state 16 languages are spoken and out of these 16 only a few have fluent speakers under the age of 60 and all other speakers are above 60. According to the language shift rate, it is estimated that 45 of American Indian and Alaska Native languages were likely go extinct in 2000, 105 by 2025 and 135 by 2050. Many other remaining languages will be inthe struggle of survival in the future(Krauss, 1991).

The above mentioned 105 American, Indian and Alaska languages which were estimated to be dead in 2025, are now more doubted for being dead, because of very high COVID-19 infection and also a large number of deaths in America.

III. CONCLUSION

By concluding the study, we can simply say that any sudden outbreak of a disease may be its epidemic or pandemic if its infectious enough to cause death it can leave disastrous effect on language as well. As the life of language is supremely intimated with its speaker's life. Death ratio because of COVID-19 surely affected some extinct languages badly.

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