

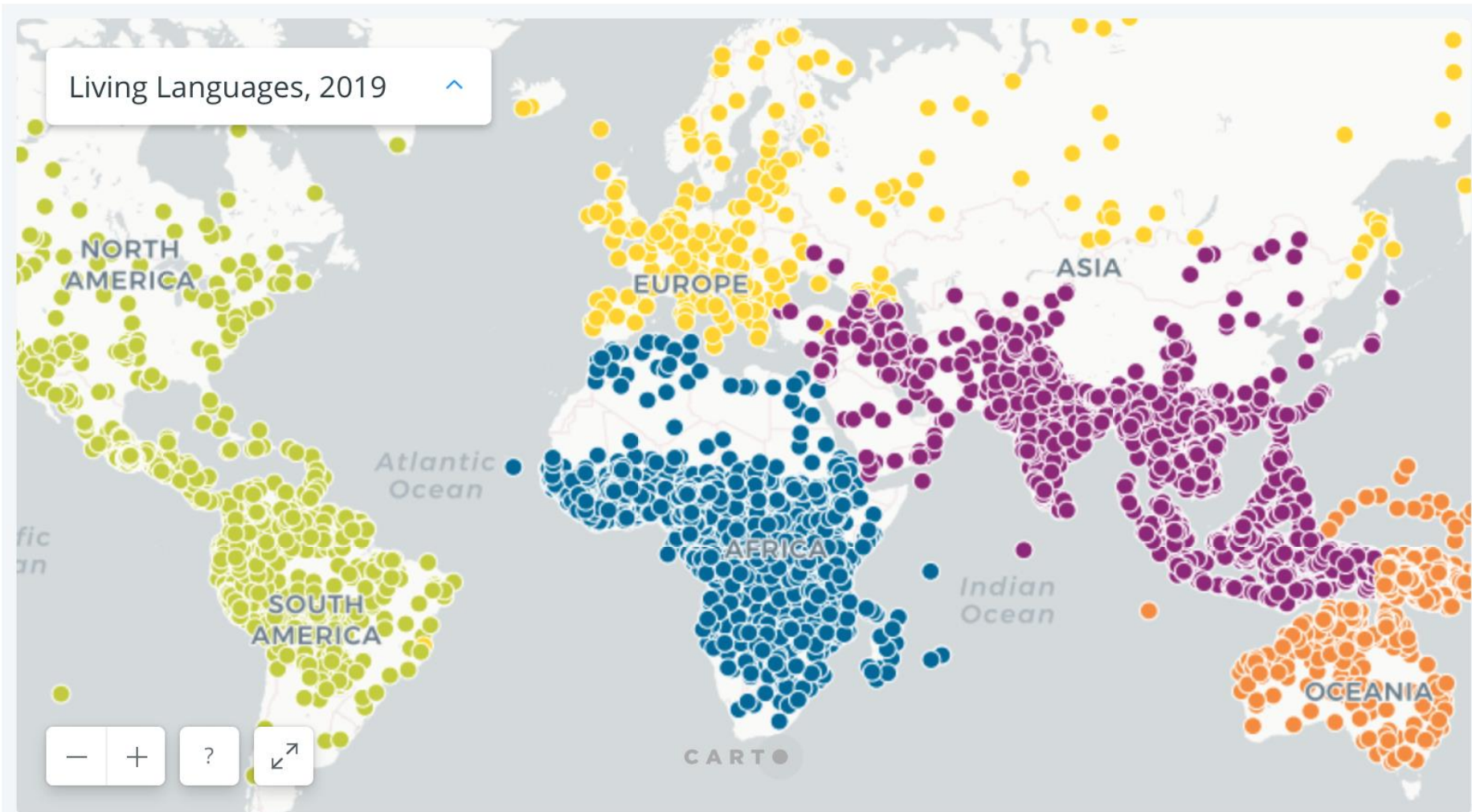


Language and Migration

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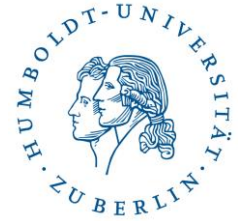
7111 languages



World Languages



- Number of languages changes constantly
- Several languages become extinct
- New languages emerge



Languages and change

- Languages themselves change
- In time, e.g. Greek or Latin and the Modern Romance languages
- In space: the place they are spoken changes via migration
- **Focus:**
- what is the relationship between language and migration?
- How does migration affect language?



Language and migration



- Lewis (2015):
- “Whatever the cause, the movement of people also means the movement of languages from their original geographic locations to new locations and to new **language ecologies**.
- “Where once users of the language may have been in contact with speakers of a specific set of other languages, in the new context, **they are interacting with a very different configuration of speakers and their languages.**”
- “These changes in the linguistic environment result **in changes in the languages themselves.**”

The multilingual society



- Migrants all speak/use more than one language
- Language of the country of origin (**heritage language**) and language of the new environment (**majority language**)
- This is a so-called language contact situation
 - within the individual and within society





The issues

The focus has been on

- i) **either improving the knowledge of the majority language**
- ii) **preserving** the heritage language, because it is crucially related to the migrants' identity.
- While both are certainly important:
- (i) shows little understanding of the simple fact that modern societies are multilingual
- (ii) imposes a static view on (the heritage) language



Language and Migration: multilingualism

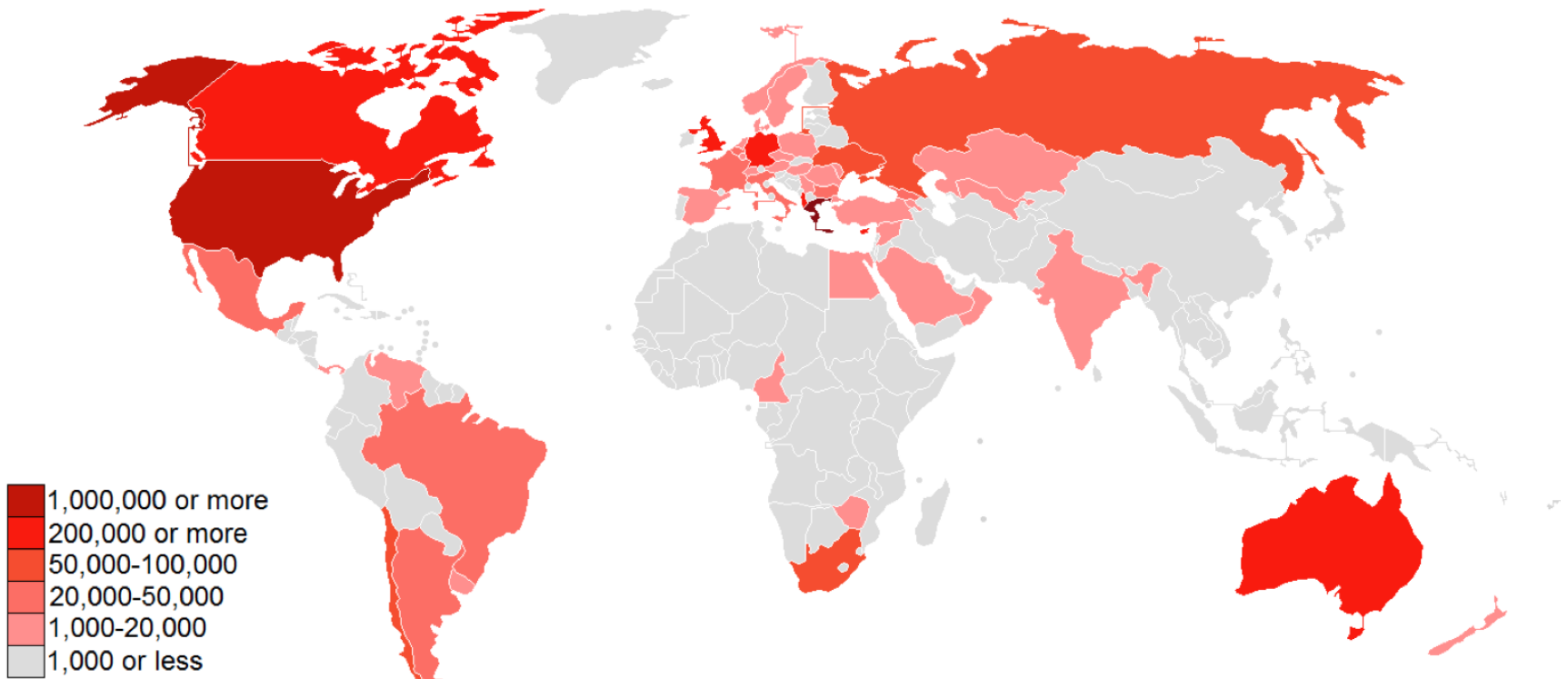
- Asymmetric relationship:
- a bilingual speaker cannot use her two languages the same way
- Ability depends on mode of communication (writing, speaking) and settings (formal, informal)

- Majority and Heritage language share this communicative space
- Monolingual speakers naturally use different forms of the language in these different settings and modes of communication

Greek Diaspora



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:50_largest_Greek_diaspora.png



Greek diaspora: issues



- Speakers do not all come from the same region
- They all speak a different Greek dialect
- They did not all receive the same level of education in their home country

- Their children do not all receive the same education in the heritage language in the new environment
- Greek communities are not all organized the same way

Greek diaspora: issues



- All this may affect literacy and knowledge of particular settings and modes of communication,
- but it **does not affect** grammatical knowledge, if speakers have access to the language, i.e. if the heritage language is spoken at home or within the community



Language and Migration: radical change

- Three generations rule (Fishman 1972)
- The first generation of immigrants are bilingual, but fluent in the heritage language
- Their children are bilingual but not so fluent in the heritage language, the majority language is dominant
- The grand-children are monolingual in the majority language
- **Result:** heritage language death and loss

Language and Migration: radical change



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/brotherhoodofstlaurence/30500950133/>

Typical multilingual behavior: creativity and change



- **Language mixing:**

(i) Στη γειτονιά που μένουμε εχουνε πολλές **μπάρες**
In my neighbourhood there are many bars

(ii) έχει κι ένα ελληνικό μέρος με πίτες Peter Pan
there is a greek place with pies Peter Pan
πιο εκεί πέρα κάτω τρεις τέσσερις **μπλόκους**.
over there down three-four blocks

(iii) Αλλά έχουμε **γιάρδα**
but we have yard

Language and Migration: creativity and change

- **New words and structures**

(i) είδα ένα **τράκαμα**.

saw a car-crash

(ii) Εκτός αν το πάρουμε **με** ογδοντα

unless if it take.1PL with eighty

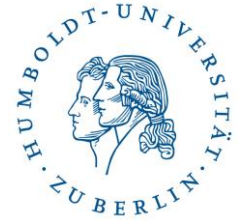
(iii) **Ipirhane** mia gineka ki enan andra

existed a woman.acc and a man.acc



Language and Migration: creativity and change

- Some forms get rid of irregular patterns in the grammar
- Some forms follow the general rules of Greek grammar and generalize them
- Some forms emerge through interference with the majority language and borrowing of words and structures
- Some forms sound maybe strange in Standard Greek, but are acceptable in dialects and informal settings



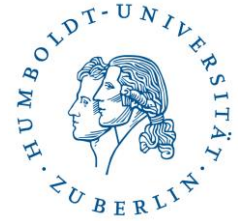
Language and Migration: creativity and change

- Generalization of dialectal and/or more informal/oral communicative situations?
- **Change not simplification**
- What is the standard form?
- Often we take written modes of communication to represent the standard form
- Even in these written forms language changes



Language and Migration: creativity and change

- Literacy is seen as variable of linguistic behavior
- Undoubtedly literacy is a key to further development and success,
- But: it is not the key for **grammar** development (many of the 7111 languages spoken world-wide are simply oral languages, also sign languages)



Language and Migration: creativity and change

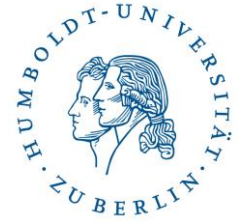
- Language constantly changes, it does not have one 'monolithic' form that has to be preserved for all time
- Acknowledgment of multi-faceted dimension of language is important for understanding linguistic behavior of individual speakers and societies



Language and Migration: creativity and change

- Embrace variation and multilingual behavior is key for social cohesion
- Focus on what speakers can do, as there is no right or wrong and not one form of language speakers must use in all contexts
- Different forms for different contexts

Language and Migration: creativity and change



- Language is subject to change as are all aspects of human societies
- In migration contexts, change takes place perhaps somewhat faster

