Linguistic diversity and Multilingualism

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Unit 1
Outline of the presentation

1. Linguistic diversity
2. Multilingualism
1. Linguistic Diversity
Surely just as the extinction of any animal species diminishes our world, so does the extinction of any language. Surely we linguists know, and the general public can sense, that any language is a supreme achievement of a uniquely human collective genius, as divine and endless a mystery as a living organism. Should we mourn the loss of Eyak or Ubykh any less than the loss of the panda or California condor? (Krauss, 1992: 8)
Language size

- There are almost 7000 languages in the world and about 200 independent countries.

- There are languages with millions of speakers and languages at risk.
Language hotspots

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/mission/enduringvoices
2. Multilingualism
Multilingualism as an individual and social phenomenon

‘The ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives’

(European Commission, 2007)
Multilingualism

‘Experts know that multilingualism is not the aberration or minority phenomenon many English speakers suppose it to be. It is, on the contrary, a normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority of the world’s population’ (Romaine, 2001)
Multilingualism in the world today

- Increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in Western societies
- The spread of English as a language of wider communication
It is this diversity that makes the European Union what it is: not a ‘melting pot’ in which differences are rendered down, but a common home in which diversity is celebrated, and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding (European Commission 2005.2)
Education

► Important role in the protection and development of minority languages

► Teaching English as a LWC

► Contribution to the development of multilingual identities
Multilingual education and society

► Schools are part of society and the relation between schools and the society in which they are located is bidirectional.

► Multilingual education is a real-life dynamic laboratory of language acquisition, language contact and language use in society.
Multilingualism
Multilingualism
¿Roma?
References


References
