Language Death: When languages disappear

By Viktor Höhn

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Linguistics, grade: 1,0, University of Trier, course: Applied Linguistics, 31 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: A language dies when nobody speaks it any more. However, there are different ways languages die. In this regard, three types of language death can be identified: population loss, forced shift, and voluntary shift. One must, however, recognize that the divisions between them are not always clear. Many language deaths involve some combination of all three. Besides, there is a considerable grey area between forced and voluntary shift. The distinction between what is forced and what is voluntary is problematic, but the terms are useful as idealized ends of a continuum.

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