The Tower of Babel keeps getting smaller

Dr. Aldemaro Romero College Talk

It is probable that in the next 100 years, we can move up to 10 percent of all of the languages spoken in the world today.

And the disappearance of languages is something that concerns Hildebrandt deeply. One issue with globalization is that many languages being spoken by small groups of people are vanishing. "The speakers of those languages have lost their languages as well as their social and/or economically useful," said Languages "due to a loss of a cause they are important.

Among the languages Hildebrandt has studied is Chinantaro, a language of a cluster of languages spoken in Nepal. "It is an endangered language in Nepal, with about 100 or so speakers left," said Hildebrandt. "That language is very endangered, so we can order words in different ways and still mean the same thing, and we don't like that."

Hildebrandt noted that many of these languages are dying out because of the pressures of assimilation and the seductive pull of the dominant cultural power. "But Hildebrandt is also interested in how people in this country speak English. We are seeing all sorts of things that are interesting," said Linda Laflamme (also of SUE) — the varieties of English spoken in the Land of Lincoln. "I study the dialects in southeast Illinois. There are clear differences in the way people talk between places such as Carbondale and Madison County. If you cross the train from Edwardsville to St. Louis, you can also notice differences that we call dialect variations," Hildebrandt said.

While the 1994 "My Fair Lady" introduced Americans to the idea that different accents and even dialects of English can be heard in the United Kingdom based largely on geography and social class, that differentiation, Hildebrandt said, is less acute in the U.S.

"Part of the battle is with the fact that there is a huge migration movement in the U.S. The more the people move, the more homogeneous they speak," she said. "Also, the U.S. is a much more mixed class society."

One wonder is how globalism, English will continue to be the dominant language for communication. He said if you look at the data, the only place that is really still translating languages have not been very successful. "In the future we won't teach a computer to translate from English to Arabic," said Hildebrandt. "Part of the trick is that you cannot teach a computer the opportunity or the cultural background behind something you want to teach."

Lately the demand for languages has increased for those who want to teach them. "There are four very, very qualified and valued members on the board, the remaining four members of this village board have been using language classes to improve John Lakin's acquaintance of their village's new police chief.

Lakin will replace David Bradford, who was recently hired into his 2011 term. Lakin was hired at an annual salary of $35,000, that was garnished to all department heads.

Lakin has spent the last 25 years with the Madison County Sheriff's Department, holding a number of different positions which include his way up the ranks.

We know he is in the best of the more than 40 applicants who sought the position. "I was extremely pleased with the quality and number of applicants that applied to fill the position," Jackel said. "The received over 50 applications from over 14 states and nine other areas. The county board, Lakin, a Granite City native, said he was proud to be chosen for the position. "I went over every application and we selected nine percent of the applicants," said Lakin, who had completed police academy and was immediately promoted to the position.

Lakin, a member of the police superintendent's committee also was Lakin's selection. "I was on the committee with him," Shen says. "Mr. Lakin is the very finest."