

Chapter 19

From Theory to Practice (and Vice Versa): Review, Reconsideration and Reiteration

J.A. FISHMAN

Having 'read around the world', visiting both old and new cases of RLS efforts (a dozen and a half in all), the time has come both to attempt a summary of what has been learned and to consider how well RLS appears to be formulated and implemented a decade after its launching (Fishman, 1991). All of my comments below take as their points of departure the views and opinions reported by my colleagues in this volume, to whom I am most grateful for their cooperation, no matter how much I may agree or disagree with one or another of them, whether theoretically or empirically. Although I will use and explain much of the theoretical schemata initially employed in 1991, it is nevertheless the case that as a result of working on this volume 'there have been some changes made', both in detail and in general approach.¹

Ideological Clarification

My initial stance that it was not terribly crucial for the practice of RLS to spell out its ideological foundations (the 'why?' of RLS), since those involved in RLS obviously knew why they were doing so, seems to me, in retrospect, to have assumed greater unanimity and clarity of purpose than RLSers themselves frequently evince. It still amazes me that individuals who have spent their entire adult lives (and often good chunks of their adolescent years as well) engaged in RLS efforts are, nevertheless, often uncomfortable and somewhat tongue-tied about explaining why they are involved in this way, whether to themselves or to the doubting Thomases that surround them, among Xians and among Yians alike. It is as if there were some contra-intuitive, contra-normative or irrational aspects of their own beliefs, values and behaviours that are so generally questioned by others that RLSers themselves often can't really totally free themselves of

some nagging doubts about their preoccupation with their own threatened language.

Five Ideological Challenges to RLS

Monetary values, ethnocultural values and cultural democracy

RLS is concerned with the recovery, recreation and retention of *a complete way of life*, including non-linguistic as well as linguistic features. Some of the features of both kinds are solidly documented in memories, texts and realia of the near and distant past. Others are innovative extensions and inventions required in order to cope with the differences between now and then, between an interrupted past and the partly unprecedented present. All cultures and the social identities that they foster – even those of well-established and seemingly unthreatened Yian societies – are partially continuations and partially innovations relative to their own pasts. When both continuations and innovations are under local self-regulation they fuse together into a seemingly seamless authentic whole. RLS is the linguistic part of the pursuit of ethnocultural self-regulation which democracies and international bodies are increasingly recognising as a basic right for indigenous (and often also for immigrant) populations. Entry into the European Union and several other European and North Atlantic organisations for ‘cooperation and security’ has repeatedly been postponed for post-Soviet eastern European countries because these countries still have not worked out amicable, accepting and supportive policies with respect to their own indigenous minorities. The absence of such mutually agreed upon policies in Slovakia, Roumania and Belorus, for example, has been taken as contravening the standards that members of these organisations must attain and abide by. RLSers must realise that such organisations and their declarations, treaties and conventions are pursuing goals that are consonant with the building blocks of modern democratic societies. Rather than being in any way questionable or retrogressive, these are goals that should be pursued with heads held high.

But are these goals realistic with respect to maximising success *vis-à-vis* the material dimensions of individual and societal success? The European Union seems to think so, pointing to ultimate higher productivity (overall and in minority regions) of countries with more progressive minority policies. But the opponents of RLS efforts never tire of pointing out that most major reward systems are linked to Yish use and, indeed, Yish mastery. They claim that it is more rewarding to link local populations linguistically with the widest economic and social system to which they can gain access.

They stress that those languages are most 'useful' that yield the greatest 'social advancement' and that Xish is hardly in the running in those terms. They claim that language policies succeed when and only when they correspond to labour-market considerations. In short, Yians and Xians- via-Yish frequently persuade those advocating and using Xish that such efforts are pernicious *vis-à-vis* the economic success of their own co-ethnics. Such claims are often devastating for Xish parents who need to establish a 'Xish home-language policy' in which to raise their own children. Parents are seldom familiar with the objective economic findings on which the policies and declarations of the most modern inter-polity organisations are based and they need to be reassured that they will not be handicapping their own children by socialising them and educating them in Xish (see, e.g. Grin, 1997, 1999).

It is in such grass-roots discussions – particularly when the immediate economic potential of Xish is low – that the true complexity of Xish values and identity need to be stressed. Xians are invariably bilingual (much more so than Yians) and, therefore, in no way cut off from the economic rewards that are presumably inherent in Yish. Yish will long (and perhaps even always) be part of the education of Xish children. If only knowledge of Yish stood between Xish workers and Yish-controlled rewards, the economic well-being of the former would be much better off than it usually is. Furthermore, the economic reward dimension is not the only one that defines Xish individual and social identity (nor, for that matter, that defines Yish individual and social identity either). Societally weaker languages always need more than mere economic rationales. It is not labour-market access but economic power which is disproportionately in Yish hands and that is a problem that will rarely be overcome on linguistic grounds alone. As a result, even Xian bilingualism usually does not lead to any redistribution of economic power and, that being the case, the maintenance of Xish identity and cultural intactness becomes all the more important for community problem solving, health, education and cultural creativity. Vulgar materialism (whether Marxist or capitalist) does not begin to do justice to the nuanced and complexly interrelated human values, behaviours and identities that are essentially non-materialistic or even anti-materialistic in nature (among them being family loyalty, friendship ties, spirituality, affection and intimacy, aesthetics and the corpus of ethics that each culture expresses and continually develops). Isn't it the mark of higher cultures to have other than material values, the latter being merely the most elementary expression of individual and group needs? Do not Yians too pride themselves precisely on the non-material attainments of Yish ethnocultural life?

The 'normality' of minority language death

Another frequent ideological trap faced by RLSers is the claim that language shift is only a normal consequence of minority–majority relations and that previous generations of Xians not only accepted such shift without a murmur, but even did so gladly ‘as the price of admission’. Ostensibly, then, current RLSers are just trouble-makers, disturbers of civility, by ‘arousing the natives’, in addition to standing in the way of the latter’s material progress. On the other hand, however, Yians would probably agree that (insofar as they themselves are concerned) ‘dying without a murmur’ is hardly a great virtue and that those in danger of death ought, at least, to be read their ‘Miranda rights’, i.e. informed of the probable consequences of their actions and allowed to request the aid of a lawyer or advocate. Wouldn’t at least some of those Xians, who presumably accepted language shift without a murmur, have been more reluctant to do so if they had been made aware of the fact that *there were other viable options* (X + Y bilingualism, for example), on the one hand, and that the promised rewards for language shift were by no means guaranteed? Shouldn’t Xians be suspicious of a point of view that assumes that it is natural for their culture and identity to die, whereas it is not at all natural for the same to happen to Yians? Isn’t ‘natural’ merely used to disguise a power play and to discourage resistance to it? And, finally, aren’t those few who did ‘murmur’ (protest and attempt RLS), who denied that it was more noble and civilised for their culture to die than to live, being overlooked or even besmirched for resisting? Isn’t history being rewritten *ex post facto* to favour the winners *ab initio*?

Yish is peaceful; RLS is inherently conflictual

A third Yian mainstream ploy is to bemoan the purported ‘conflictual nature’ of RLS. It is not the majority Yians who are conflictual (even though they punitively control and implement by far the major reins of power and of the purse) but the unequal efforts of Xians that are responsible for all trouble-making. Even the much vaunted ‘no language policy’ of many democracies is, in reality, an anti-minority-languages policy, because it delegitimises such languages by studiously ignoring them and, thereby, not allowing them to be placed on the agenda of supportable general values. Certainly most RLS efforts (those referred to throughout this volume as constituting Stages 8–5) are quite the opposite of confrontational in any real sense; they are inherently based upon efforts to win over public opinion by seeking support, approval and recognition, both in the Yian camp and in the Xian camp as well. Many would argue that even Stage 4 is

non-confrontational since compulsory education, of whatever kind, must still meet all of the requirements of the Yian authorities. Stages 3–1 are equally non-confrontational if pursued via the normal democratic political processes of compromise, bargaining and coalition building. Isn't the accusation against RLSers of 'fostering conflict and confrontation' a case of 'the pot calling the kettle black'? In almost all cases the power at the disposition of RLSers is puny indeed in comparison with the power directed against them that they must overcome. Isn't the confounding of political and physical struggle a Yian demagogic rather than a democratic tactic? Isn't even the expression 'political struggle' merely a metaphor which includes the entire political process, including compromise, coalition building, bargaining, the right to petition and organise, etc., etc.? And isn't a political struggle the best guarantee that no physical struggle will obtain? Is it really wise to leave RLSers with only a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' Hobson's choice?

Your nationalism is worse than mine!

The relationship between RLS-efforts and other types of organised minority ethnonational efforts is a fourth phenomenon that troubles some Yian ideological critics. It is undoubtedly true that such a relationship often obtains. Just as nationalism is ethnicity rendered conscious and mobilised, so RLS is language maintenance rendered conscious and mobilised. RLS depends on eliciting and activating the ethnocultural sympathies, conscious identities and overt loyalties of a threatened language's traditionally associated ethnocultural population. Local/regional ethnocultural movements exist peacefully within most (if not actually all) democratic polities of the world. If not permitted to function peacefully, they have no option but to function clandestinely, but function they must, because they are an expression of an important part of the identity and of the problem solving potential of their supporters. Do they constitute a potential for 'trouble' for Yians and their authorities? Only if oppressed. In an increasingly global society such oppression makes even less sense than heretofore, since even the already recognised political boundaries are increasingly meaningless for the purposes of directing or conducting the major econotechnical, commercial and communicational processes that are at the very heart of globalisation. However, the coming of globalisation in certain aspects of human functioning makes 'localisation' even more important in modern part-identity, equally so for state-nation, nation-state and sub-state populations (RLS being of particular relevance for the latter).

One language per country is enough (particularly if it is my language in my country)

The disingenuous nature of the Yian attack on 'RLS-efforts as an expression of Xish ethnicity' is evident in a fifth Yian ideological position that 'one language per country is enough' (Myhill, 1999; Edwards, 1994). Cynically claiming that Yians have as much right to 'a place of their own' as do Xians, they champion territoriality as the basis of Yian language policy, returning the moral level of the discussion to the level of 19th century imperialisms. There are only c. 200 polities in the world today and some 4000 to 6000 languages. Carrying the above outlandish view to its logical conclusion would be tantamount to consigning thousands of languages to extinction or suicide, on the one hand, or to that very same endless territorial subdivision of the world of which Yians frequently and falsely accuse minority ethnocultural activists. There is no need for such either/or scenarios, just as there is no need to choose between the territorial and the ethno-identity (or personality) principle of human aggregation. These are both false Cartesian dichotomies imposed upon phenomena that are in reality hierarchical co-occurrences. Just as there is no mind-body dichotomy, so minorities are well accustomed to both an ethnic and a civil (territorial) identity and it is high time that Yians accepted the true complexity of their own identificational potential, particularly as the world of globalisation engulfs them just as surely as it will engulf the Xians. To expect Xians to give up Xish merely because they are living in Yland, is tantamount to expecting Yians to give up Yish just because they are living in a world increasingly dominated by Anglophone technological-economic-military power.

It is ludicrous for Yians to appeal for sympathy with their 'agony' on being faced by ethnolinguistic minorities in their midst. Are Yians, therefore, unable to socialise their own children into their traditional ethnolinguistic cultures? Are they unable, therefore, to manage their own ethnocultural affairs, to support their own educational, governmental and mass-media institutions as well as foster their own economic viability? To equate the dangers to Yish exclusive territorial and institutional *domination* to the dangers to Xish cultural *existence* is to evince a moral blindspot of disconcerting proportions. It is but one more example of the truism that ethnolinguistic democracy is denied downward in the power hierarchy but appealed for (and struggled for) upward in the power hierarchy. It is yet another example of Yians wanting to have it both ways, i.e. to dominate those hierarchically below them, without being dominated by those hierarchically above them, in a world in which they themselves have much more power than do Xians.

The above five ideological criticisms of RLS activities require constant orientational efforts, both within Xian circles as well as in explaining Xian aspirations for ethnocultural self-perpetuation to Yians. RLSers need feel no embarrassment in opposing the above charges because they are not only baseless and self-serving, but they are also fed by impoverished and impoverishing views of the true richness of the human personality, of human identificational processes and of the growing search for meaningfulness in post-modern global society. The struggle for RLS is a struggle for a more humane humanity all over the world and, yes, it is ultimately a struggle on behalf of Yians too! In today's world, with its growing multicultural emphases, with its march toward civil nationalism in state-nations and in nation-states alike, with its growing 'terralingual' environmentalism (in which the protection of ethnolinguistic diversity is viewed as literally part and parcel of environmental protection of all other natural resources), there should be less and less need for RLSers to explain themselves, let alone defend themselves, in their efforts which can ultimately benefit us all.

Ideological Supports for RLS

We are the only ones on whom Xish can count for support

Hungary and Finland are two European polities with a joint myth: that they are 'orphans' in Europe and that the very future of their language, culture and people, therefore, rests entirely on their own shoulders. No one else will come to their assistance because they have no 'family' relationship with any others. Quebec too has made much of this line of support. It is 'the only possible champion of French on the entire American continent' (setting aside French Guiana, the francophone Caribbean islands and St Pierre and Miquelon as too insignificant to count in the struggle with such giants as English and Spanish). But this moving argument, a justification for special efforts because of special responsibilities, is one that many can utilise. Not only is Spain the only possible defender of Spanish in Europe, but so is Galicia the only possible defender of Gallego. Not only is Israel the only possible political entity in the entire world that might defend Hebrew, but so is Malta with respect to Maltese. Indeed, this argument lays bare the constantly surprising fact that even apparently mighty nations and languages often are self-declared weaklings in need of urgent self-protective measures. French in France is deathly afraid of the worldwide (and particularly the European and most particularly the entertainment-media and econotechnical) power of English and does not blush to claim the right of self-protection at every turn. But this is obviously an argument of special

relationship, affection and responsibility which applies many-fold more – or at least equally – to most ‘really’ threatened languages the world over.

Coupled with the admonition that modern polities cannot really be monolingual anyway, and that in a multicultural stance they can better attract and hold the loyalties of all of their citizens of varying ethnicities, the special responsibility of Xians for Xish seems eminently reasonable and even more urgent. If the defenders of English in the USA feel threatened by Spanish, what should the defenders of Navaho feel *vis-à-vis* English? Sweden is a perfect example of the balance between Yish recognition of Xish minorities and the self-defence that Yish advocates are also entitled to. Having recognised five minority languages as co-official languages of Sweden (among them Finnish, a regional variety of Finnish, Eskimo, Romani and Yiddish) by virtue of their having been used there continuously for several centuries, Sweden has also adopted special measures for the ‘overarching goal’ of cultivation and support of Swedish (Jernudd, 1999). Indeed, no one (neither Xians nor Yians) feels safe when not in control of their own cultural boundaries and cultural functions. This is a feeling that Xians and Yians can both recognise and on behalf of which that they can hopefully work together via the democratic processes of compromise and mutual accommodation. The European Union’s ‘Bureau of Lesser Used Languages’ and various of its treaties, charters and conventions have established the significance of such languages for the unity and the progress of Europe, in addition to the numerous state languages (potentially 30 to 50 in number) and the 11 official languages of the Union itself. Certainly this is an ideological precedent that RLSers can and should broadcast, both within Europe and elsewhere as well.

Community and ‘virtual community’ are not the same thing at all as far as intergenerational mother tongue transmission are concerned

The alacrity with which some RLSers have turned to bringing out their own language-encoded versions of Windows 2000, lends a special urgency to the realisation that intergenerational mother tongue transmission depends on the existence of *real community* rather than its ‘virtual’ pale shadow. Indeed, although cyber-space can be put to use for RLS purposes, neither computer programmes, e-mail, search engines, the web as a whole, chat boxes nor anything directly related to any or all of them can substitute for face-to-face interaction with *real family imbedded in real community*. Ultimately, nothing is as crucial for basic RLS success as intergenerational mother-tongue transmission. *Gemeinschaft* (the intimate community whose members are related to one another via bonds of kinship, affection and

communality of interest and purpose) is *the real secret weapon of RLS*. This may seem like a puny and archaic weapon in competition with globalisation, which threatens not only minority languages but even much of worldwide Yish capacity to maintain resources, decision making and even many of the institutions of socialisation (such as the school) in the hands of local languages and cultures. Globalisation itself is built around controls and connections that make it possible for the major players to shift jobs, cultures, environmental problems and labor standards back and forth. The basic problem of RLS is the problem of how Xish can possibly eke out a safe-harbour for itself in the face of such unprecedented competition.

The answer is that RLS need not be in opposition to globalisation *per se*; it can function as an addition to and as a welcome alternative to complete globalisation and can be orthogonal to it. Modern humanity desperately needs to restrict or compartmentalise-off certain of its most human processes from contamination by globalisation. The family is not a business and is not 'operated efficiently' so as to show a 'bottom line' profit. Neither is friendship, childhood socialisation and enculturation, neighbourliness or community mindedness and community participation in religious, educational, entertainment, 'hobbying' activities or acts of comforting and assisting the sick, poor and bereaved. These go on wherever communities insist upon and contribute to retaining a realm of existence which is not governed by office and business affairs. They are powerful shields against alienation and their power resides exactly in the fact that they can be kept unrelated to and uncompetitive with the massive *Gesellschaft* with which they co-exist. Their weakness is their strength, their unimportance from a purely dollars and cents perspective is their importance for our sanity and privacy in the midst of myriad urban, modern, global intrusions into our lives.

Although most RLS movements are urban in location and in the economic processes in which their supporters are engaged, they are rural and religious in metaphor and in myth and, therefore, they strike a bargain with urban hyperconnectedness, compartmentalising it off from the realms of intimacy and ethnocultural identity. RLS movements seek linkages to histories, cultures and identities that predate globalisation and that smack of eternal verities that are substantially outside the orbit of globalisation. The hunger for ethnocultural roots and for more traditional religious affiliation, unrelated as the two may be, are notable precisely in the populations most impacted by the pace of globalisation. RLS promises greater self-regulation of one's home, family, neighbourhood and community, on the one hand, and of one's own history and culture, on the other hand. It is a promise that appeals to all those who realise that notwithstanding all of the much-touted benefits of globalisation, the world is all too

much with us and in us. Many also long for a corner in which they can be their intergenerational selves and be with others of that same longing too, and that is the RLS corner in which their own traditionally interpreted language, customs, beliefs, holidays, stories, foods and sanctities can continue to prevail. Many Yians long for this too and that longing should be tapped in soliciting Yian sympathy, understanding and even assistance in conjunction with the far greater Xian plight.

On Remaking, Rethinking and Generalising from Local History

Like the post-60s ethnic revival as a whole, RLS was not supposed to happen. However, not only has it happened, but some of the very processes of globalisation and post-modernism that were supposed to be most deleterious to purportedly 'parochial' identities have actually contributed most to their re-emergence as 'part-identities'. The increasing ubiquity of the civil state, of civil nationalism and, therefore, of a shared supra-ethnic civil nationalism as part of the identity constellation of all citizens, has resulted in more rather than less recognition of multiculturalism at the institutional level and a more widespread implementation of local ethnicity as a counterbalance to civil nationalism at the level of organised part-identity. The result is a growing recognition of the need to rethink the history of the Yish-controlled state in terms of 'one country, many cultures'.

The Latvian government recently revised its originally anti-Russian 'Latvian Only' language policy (Ozolins, 1999) not so much to curry favour with Russia as to curry favour with the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Nato, all of which require 'conformity with international norms *vis-à-vis* minorities' in their member states (as well as in states that seek to be considered for membership). The Israeli premier Ehud Barak, in his 1999 post-election victory speech, extended 'a warm and firm hand to the secular, religious, ultra-Orthodox settlers, Sephardim and Ashkenazim, Ethiopian and Russian immigrants, Arabs, Druze, Circassians and the Bedouins [because] all are part of the Israeli people'. What a revision of history, when an ethnonational state (a state that originally viewed itself as created by and for one people) comes to view itself as a civil state which belongs to all its citizens, of whatever ethnicity, all of them entitled to retain their respective ethnicities as part of their total identities! Indeed, Yians too are merely another local minority when viewed in global perspective, particularly if they seek to be recognised by the international community of nations. To attain such recognition and acceptance 'from above', they need to implement

justice for those whom they rule. Thus does globalisation itself foster 'localisation' in its wake. The removal of trade-walls makes bilingualism an asset rather than a debit and a more rather than a less valuable individual and collective attribute. How can all of this be explained, and how does RLS fit into any explanation that is parsimoniously satisfying and predictively useful?

Of course, both vulgar Marxism and vulgar historicism immediately come to the fore. If even Cicero realised that local identities tend to be reinterpreted in the direction of the greatest possible rewards (Roman roads, Roman commerce, Roman peace), then it should come as no surprise that some latter-day thinkers have also concluded that economics may be the strongest force influencing the fate of endangered communities. But it is too late for a fruitful replay of the 19th century Marx/Weber debate, in which the latter held that culture helped fashion economic reality every bit as much as the latter contributed to the former. The exact borders separating the two (culture and economics) are not that clear at any rate, given that there are no cultures without their own economic processes and that there are no economic processes that are not culturally imbedded. One thing we can be sure of, however, is that RLS becomes necessary because of extra-economic considerations as well and that an effective programme of RLS involves a plan as to how to focus resources rather than merely the extent of the programme's economic wherewithal *per se*. Vulgar Marxism and economic determinism merely leave RLSers empty and hopeless, for, under most foreseeable circumstances they will possess markedly fewer resources than will their opponents. The basic RLS question is, therefore, how best to use the scarce resources at the command of RLSers, rather than to call a moratorium on RLS until such time as more 'nearly competitive' resources are at hand.

Another danger is to arrive at conclusions with respect to RLS desiderata by overemphasising a particular (but limited) pool of historical experience. Most RLS theories and efforts are byproducts of European indigenous minority problems. Certainly, however, such problems cannot be the only ones from which a general (and all-inclusive) RLS theory should be derived. On the other hand, only the local circumstances of any particular case can fully account for that case (but for no other case). Both of these risks are well illustrated in the papers that constitute the bulk of this volume. The indigenous minority cases do not, however, speak to the immigrant cases and the latter rarely speak to the former. The fortunes of immigrant languages are substantially influenced by 'home country' events, most prominent among them the relationships between the 'home country' and the 'host country'. The ease (cost and frequency) with which immigrants

can revisit the home country, economic cycles in both places and the extent to which they are in tandem or unrelated, the degree or similarity between 'old' and 'new' immigrant cohorts (enabling or disabling them insofar as united ethnocultural efforts are concerned), the presence or absence of co-linguals from different countries of origin, are other important considerations that are particularly relevant to immigrant languages but far less so, if at all, for indigenous ethnolinguistic groups.

Obviously, all of the above considerations, pertinent though they may be for the future of Spanish in the USA (currently a touchy topic for many adherents and opponents of RLS among American linguistic minorities), are not relevant – unless reconceptualised in much more general terms – for indigenous (aboriginal) minorities in the USA or elsewhere of the very kinds that Terralingua (Note 2, Preface) is most concerned about. Obviously, the outcome of RLS efforts in any particular case are overdetermined by that case's own particular historical dynamics; but to convert that history into a general theory (or into a substitute for general theory) is to engage in vulgar historicism. Certainly, the specifics of any case must be taken into consideration in all local action, but general theory must rise above such specifics, just as the specifics themselves, important though they may be, must be seen as merely exceptional addenda and refinements for the general theory. Examples of such specifics are the mobilising impact of 'language insult' suffered by Xish in Yland, the 'adrenalin-like' impact of the annual speaking-singing-listening convention of Xish-speakers in Zland, and the certainty that a single Yian living for many months with one of the last, aging speakers of Xish will then give the language a new lease on societal life among Xians-via-Yish; these are other examples of 'good things to do' that can only naively be recommended as sufficient for general theory or for general application elsewhere. Local description is a very delicate and indispensable intellectual tool, but it is not the same as, nor does it necessarily even contribute to general theory or general practice, any more than clinical practice necessarily leads to a generalised understanding of health and disease (although it is essential for arriving at such).

Desiderata for a Value-based General Theory of RLS

I have sometimes been asked why RLS is so little related to the general theory of social change. My first answer has been that RLS recognises democratic responsibility for cultural self-determination by minorities, whereas social change theory has ignored any moral responsibility toward those who suffer as a result of social change. My second answer has been that social change theory views modernisation as an inevitable universal

and ubiquitous process that pertains to all of culture, whereas RLS attempts to differentiate between faster and slower moving sectors of change and to foster greater self-regulation of the latter for the purposes of language-and-identity retention. Both of these differences are important for a general theory of RLS. RLS is applied to individual cases of threatened languages on the basis of a general theory derived from an examination of many diversified individual cases (immigration, conquest, exile, genocide, commercial domination, spread of innovation and superior knowledge, etc.). Individual cases, like clinical medicine, often require adjustments and modifications of the general theory so that it can apply to all cases rather than just to one or more specific individual ones.

A Value-based General Theory

Although RLS is firmly grounded in democratic processes, it nevertheless recognises that simple 'majority rule' does not in and of itself satisfy important requirements for the existence of a just and good society. It utilises and espouses advocacy and self-reliance on behalf of neglected, overlooked or even demeaned minorities as its two chief means of bringing about needed changes to which the majority is generally oblivious or outright unsympathetic. Rank and file minority members too, taking their cue from the majority, may also be silent with respect to their cultural misfortunes. RLS-efforts seek to make both Xians and Yians more conscious and more knowledgeable about all that is lost, individually and collectively, when a culture's traditionally associated language is lost. On the one hand, it criticises the implicit Yish view that Xish is of little value. On the other hand, it offers leadership and advice *vis-à-vis* fostering Xish. The RLS movement realises that ideological clarification with respect to the importance of RLS and cultural self-management is also not enough and that cultural democracy must be actively promoted and implemented as well. Justice, cooperation, compassion, self-reliance and cultural democracy are espoused as interrelated avenues toward cultural empowerment of the powerless who may have come to take Yish control as natural and inevitable. Many of the above-mentioned features of RLS are similar to other modern movements on behalf of greater distributive justice, e.g. unionism, feminism and cooperativism. Like them, RLS also aspires to activate educators, the helping professions and researchers, not to mention ordinary members of the Xish community, on behalf of transforming those segments and institutions of their society whose contributions are essential if greater justice for all is finally to be attained and if biases, hopelessness and ignorance in connection with Xish are to be overcome.

A General Theory with Applied Implications

RLS theory seeks to be directive or implicational *vis-à-vis* social action, rather than merely descriptive or analytic of the sociocultural scene. It steers clear of shibboleths, such as leaving 'it' to the government, or to the schools, or to symbolic and formulaic insertions of Xish on web-sites, or e-mail in Xish as substitutes for home, family, neighbourhood, community based face-to-face language use *per se*. Prescribing more 'institutions, positive attitudes or prestige and active speakers' for a threatened language is no better than giving a patient a peptalk, urging him/her to 'get a good grip on yourself'. Stressing the importance of the 'social meaning' of Xish even in unprotected environments leaves activists totally at sea as to where in real life to start, given different degrees of erosion in different community settings and unprotected environments. Certainly, situational switching into Xish for the attainment of traditional 'social meaning' cannot long continue after massive language shift has galloped along for any appreciable number of years. Similarly, 'festivities of social meaning' are notoriously weak as effective social forces for engendering normal, daily language use.

Attitudinal advice is easy to give but hard to implement. Furthermore, starting as far back as the 1940s, Einar Haugen noted that attitudes toward threatened languages seem to improve quite noticeably toward the very end, when their imminent demise is already quite evident. The Irish case also is a good example of how attitudes and use can be quite unrelated to one another. and how a plethora of governmentally funded institutions can yield very little active language use either in the short run or in the long. Small and retentive languages in many parts of the globe are seemingly without formal institutions, large numbers of speakers or noticeably positive attitudes or prestige. On the other hand, Latin seems to have had all of the above highly touted desiderata and nevertheless lost its vernacular speakers, remaining only as a classical tongue for very limited functions among a very limited clientele. Additionally, if such *ad hoc* considerations are to have any utility as guides to action, we must know how they rank relative to each other. We must also know why they and only they have been selected for use (rather than, e.g. demographic concentration as distinct from simply the total number of speakers, or the proximity of a stronger economy associated with a rival language). Lastly, it would be very desirable to know what proportion of what criterion of language use they account for, either singly or *en toto*, and the degree of usefulness that RLSers can derive from them. Unfortunately, such data is unavailable for any of the proposed approaches, including those that I have proposed.

The stagewise nature of 1991 RLS-theory has been accused of having implications of evolutionary inevitability. Actually, these stages are intended only for purposes of diagnostic and programmatic location. ('where to start' and 'what to aim at when'). The movement from one stage to another is totally a result of self-directed activity, rather than of any natural process of a built-in developmental nature. The stages (which will be commented upon below) are nothing but a logical set of priorities or targets to guide RLS-efforts toward a desired goal. It places the responsibility for most RLS action on those who advocate an 'Xian-via-Xish' identity. It requires an enterprising and committed Xian community for its stability and does not take any comfort in the possible assistance of Yians-via-Xish (Germans who have learned to speak Yiddish (as a means of penance for the Holocaust) or mainstream New Zealanders who have learned to speak Maori as an expression of sympathy for the Maori plight), who have a different community base and for whom pro-Xish efforts are normally situational, temporary, idiosyncratic and even reversible. RLS cannot be based on acts of charity by outsiders. Accordingly, RLS theory realises that multiculturalism, though welcome as an atmosphere effect, is not enough. It is overly diffuse in its ideological and practical focus and usually ignorant as to the consequences of the far greater compartmentalisation, minimalisation and subsequent evanescence of Xish than of Yish. None of the foregoing substitutes for genuine RLS-efforts by Xians, just as none lead anywhere near the establishment or the reinforcement of an intergenerational speech-community of Xians-via-Xish. Only such a community will successfully integrate Xish into a continuing and evolving Xian way of life. Without an *actual* ethnolinguistic community home, the greater prestige of a thousand computer specialists constituting a *virtual* interactive community, or a dozen Nobel prize laureates posting their works on the internet, will not augur nearly as well for the future of Xish as a thousand intergenerationally related ordinary 'rank and file' daily speakers living in proximity to one-another. RLS theory can explain why this is so, while others cannot do so, because they are not anchored in a theory that relates intergenerational Xish transmission to a theory of normal speech community functioning.

Stages of RLS: Priorities and the Linkages Between Them

RLS theory, being more than merely a descriptive tool, attempts to locate the functional disruption of X in social space and has suggested a widely (which is not yet to say 'universally') useful series of stages for doing so. Such *location helps establish both focus and priorities* for RLS efforts, rather

STAGES OF REVERSING LANGUAGE SHIFT: SEVERITY OF INTERGENERATIONAL DISLOCATION (read from the bottom up)

1. Education, work sphere, mass media and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels.
2. Local/regional mass media and governmental services.
3. The local/regional (i.e. non-neighbourhood) work sphere, both among Xmen and among Ymen.
- 4b. Public schools for Xish children, offering some instruction via Xish, but substantially under Yish curricular and staffing control.
- 4a. Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under Xish curricular and staffing control.

II. RLS to transcend diglossia, subsequent to its attainment

5. Schools for literacy acquisition, for the old and for the young, and not in lieu of compulsory education.
6. The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission.
7. Cultural interaction in Xish primarily involving the community-based older generation.
8. Reconstructing Xish and adult acquisition of XSL.

I. RLS to attain diglossia (assuming prior ideological clarification)

Figure 19.1 GIDS scale

than merely presenting a redundant restatement of Xish's functional, institutional or attitudinal deficiencies. The fulcrum of the GIDS scale is commonly Stage 6 (the home-family, neighbourhood, community, i.e. the crucial nexus of intergenerational mother tongue transmission), but other stages may be considered the fulcrum for particular languages *vis-à-vis* particular functions that are being targeted in particular cases. Stages below 6 (i.e. with numbers larger than 6) are indicative of either the absence of native speakers (Stage 8) or the absence of speakers of child-bearing age or younger (Stage 7). These stages certainly represent serious circumstances for any RLS movement aiming at a return to vernacular functions. The further away from the selected fulcrum stage, the less direct and certain is the possibility of linkage to that fulcrum. This then is the second purpose of the GIDS scale: *to cause the viewer to consider the linkage factor* and its potential for strengthening the selected fulcrum.

The functions of threatened languages in particular tend toward self-compartmentalisation. They do not possess the power (in terms of undisputed association with dynamic functions) to spill over substantially and predictably into other functions, particularly not into functions at any distance from those in which they are acquired. Thus, RLS is not, as some have claimed, a step-by-step 'from the bottom upward' effort or theory, because linkages must be sought and instituted from above as well as from below, so that additional and attractive functions can propel RLS and motivate those attracted to it. Nor must RLS be worked on in a lock-step stage-by-stage progression. As long as the crux-stage is targeted consensually and with a clear understanding of what false priorities will 'cost', and as long as the linkages from that stage to those below and above it are constantly reinforced and reassessed, there is no harm in skipping over a stage that does not correspond to a desired functional sphere for Xish. Multistage efforts are definitely not contra-indicated if: (1) the priority stage is kept first and foremost, and (2) the linkages to it are really operational rather than merely assumed as self-evident. Not all stages are germane in all cases, because not all cases are equally or similarly in disarray. Stages 8 and 7 may well be immaterial for RLS efforts aimed at Stages 2 and 1. An RLS effort that has revernacularisation as its crux goal and that then mostly emphasises the 'secret language function' of Xish when travelling abroad, or Xish greetings by the president at international conferences taking place in Xland, or of Xish exhibits for touristic and commercial visitors, is clearly disregarding the question of linkages between its goals and its efforts. Obviously, the crux-stage for religious or learned Classicals must be different than that for lingering vernaculars that still possess some immediate everyday functional possibilities and safe

harbours. While it is also true that many cases consist of separated or disparate stages (e.g. 6 + 2), the GIDS scale asks 'which of these is the crux-stage and how substantial and reliable is the linkage between the auxiliary stage(s) and the crux stage?'.

Some of my colleagues have granted that the GIDS scale has a 'heuristic' value. but caution that it is not to be taken literally or at face value. If by 'heuristic' they mean 'roughly orientational', I beg to differ. If by 'heuristic' they mean 'an aid to discovery and to trial and error solutions' I will not protest. It is not the last word that will ever be said in the difficult area of RLS. Certainly, no culturally neutral set of universal functions either exists or can exist. But it is not a minor matter to have one's priorities right and to be sure that they are supported by functions outside of themselves and, particularly, on either side of themselves. I do not remember these points having been made by others before GIDS-scale-based RLS theory appeared on the scene.

Comments on Particular Stages

The pre-intergenerational transmission stages

Stages 8 and 7 are neither unimportant nor hopeless insofar as Stage 6 is concerned. RLS movements have a great deal to gain from data collection from elderly and isolated native speakers (or 'once speakers, now semi-speakers') that are highlighted by Stage 8. The activists, linguists and teachers associated with the Xish movement can find, via tapping Stages 8 and 7) folklore (songs, proverbs, riddles, stories, jokes, prayers), vocabulary and grammatical forms that can subsequently be utilised in young-adult second language instruction groups, in infant-care and child-care groups, in Xish instruction to parenting and grandparenting groups, etc. Authentic linguistic paradigms, lexical items and texts enable RLS-efforts to attain the linkage with Xian history and tradition which Xish is presumable better able to express and convey than can Yish. Furthermore, such materials are more likely to be derived from a pre-Yian-hegemony stage and, therefore, foster autonomy motivated distancing (*Ausbau*) in those cases where Xish has been considerably altered over time due to growing Yian social and linguistic hegemony (whether or not it is a closely related language to begin with). Even RLS efforts that are well-focused at Stage 6 should seek to benefit from feedback linkages from Stage 8 and 7 efforts.

But there are yet other ways in which Stage 7 can be even more productive insofar as Stage 6 is concerned. Clubs and other neighbourhood groups consisting of 'Seniors' can be linked to Stage 6 as 'visitors', guides or demonstrators for story-telling, traditional arts and crafts instruction (and

the attainment of personal competence for community events when such arts and crafts are particularly appropriate), camping and hiking guides, singing and cooking partners and, above all, as baby sitters and infant and child-care resources. An ongoing relationship between a group of children and a group of still active seniors can be extremely rewarding for all concerned, although it requires supervision and may not be entirely without monetary costs or associated legalities. The benefits are definitely 'two way' since the 'seniors' (who may be anywhere from mid-40s and up in age) may also need language maintenance reinforcement and their exposure to supervised interaction with school and nursery youngsters may foster such language maintenance among the seniors themselves. RLS-efforts need to include an active LM outreach component since a 'revolving door' inflow of young speakers and an outflow of old speakers is not in the best interests of RLS by any means. Seniors represent a clientele for all neighbourhood public use of Xish: lectures, choruses, dramatic circles, writing contests, speaking contests, folkloristic events (including folk-dances and folk concerts etc., etc.). Seniors and their events must be treasured and nurtured, rather than considered expendable merely because seniors are well beyond childbearing age. Particularly where their own children are the generation of 'returnees' to Xish, the parents of these returnees are also the grandparents of a hoped for 'new growth' for Xish. Given the mobility of modern generations, even adopted parents and adopted grandparents are extremely valuable kin-relationships for any RLS movement.

The Intergenerational Transmission Stages

Home, family, neighbourhood, community

Several colleagues who treat essentially non-urban and not yet fully modernised speech communities have commented that Stage 6 essentially encompasses their entire sociocultural space. I must grant that this points-up a deficiency in the original GIDS model. There must be intra-stage differentiations, so that not all such groups are necessarily lumped together and so that any language maintenance and RLS variation that exists among them can be more fully highlighted. As a sociologist primarily oriented towards the study of urban and national societies, I was insufficiently aware of *intra*-Stage 6 sociofunctional differentiation in connection with *inter*-generational mother tongue transmission. The more's the pity, then, that my anthropological colleagues who are more attuned to such intra-Stage 6 variation have not suggested some lines of analysis that could be followed. Is the nuclear family such a sub-dimen-

sion?, or the early childhood play-group?; or grandparents and child/infant care arrangements?; or ceremonial occasions? etc., etc. It would certainly be highly desirable to study several cases where GIDS Stage 6 exhausts more than half of any local culture's total 'speech-interaction space', in order to refine our current general theory of RLS in accord with frequently occurring situational interactions. A 6a, 6b, 6c . . . 6n typology could then be worked out and examined for international compatibility. When Stage 6 is 'all there is', it becomes even more crucial to protect it in order that intergenerational mother tongue transmission not be disrupted or dissipated.

Colleagues have also presented (wittingly and unwittingly) at least two modern dislocations that undercut the effectiveness of Stage 6 when vernacular functions are considered the prime target of RLS. The first of these is concerned with major modernity related disruptions of family functioning (e.g. via divorce, intermarriage, frequent family dislocation) during early childhood. The second is the assumption that any long-term meaningful relationship in Xish is sufficient to establish an intergenerational mother tongue transition. Neither of the circumstances mentioned above need be fatal for RLS, but neither of them is in any way obviously conducive to RLS and, therefore, both can be considered extraneous if not contra-indicated. Certainly post-Stage 6 interactions may be linked to Stage 6 in a mutually reinforcing way, but they cannot be substituted for that stage due to their lesser affective, more time and place boundedness and more encapsulated or narrowly compartmentalised functional natures.

Perhaps it is in connection with Stage 4, the school that meets compulsory education requirements, that the GIDS scale and its approach to RSL has received the most criticism among readers worldwide (although far less so from the colleagues participating in this volume). 'Teach it in the schools' has been such a popular nostrum for whatever ails Xish (or Xian culture as a whole, and, truth be told, for far too many things that ail Yish and Yian culture as well among their own adherents – which may be the original source from which this error spills over to Xish RLSers), that any questioning of the efficacy of the school for RLS purposes has smacked as rank heresy to many. But it is exactly here that the difference between language learning and other school subjects, on the one hand, and between language learning and RLS, on the other hand, appear most clearly. Languages are not 'subjects' *per se* and they cannot be successfully acquired unless they are used for the purposes of active communication.² The lack of appreciation for this truth underlies the failure of solely school-based language study worldwide. Language study for RLS purposes will fail

even more drastically and painfully, unless Xish has a society in which it can function, *before* school begins, *outside* of school during the years of schooling and afterwards, when formal schooling is over and done with.³ Untold hours and dollars have been spent for naught because of disregard or mere lip-service for this fundamental truth.⁴ RLS is essentially a functional reversal *vis-à-vis* Xian society more generally, much more so than it is merely the pro-forma introduction of a subject in schools that meet compulsory education requirements.

Even school-based instruction in religious or secular classicals cannot be retained unless there is an after-school life for these venerable languages, either in churches or in vocations that require them. If these functions are neighbourhood based, they are part of Stage 6. If they are part of out-of-neighborhood reality, they are part of Stages 3 to 1. In all cases (with the possible exception of academic linguists), *languages are not their own rewards*. If they remain functionally locked away in the schools, they may be learned (youngsters have an amazing ability and capacity to learn 'useless' matters which they never need again, once their schooling is over), but they will not accomplish the wonderful goals of communication with neighbours far and near, improvement of commerce and diplomacy, attainment of social mobility, and familiarity with the brightest stars of world literature – and much, much less yet will they accomplish RLS – unless they are linked to 'real life' stages before, during and after school. The RLS school (whether of Stage 4a or 5, or even at the university level) must keep reality firmly in mind. Schools tend to be compartmentalising institutions. They have their own authority structure, personnel, reward system, budget and evaluation procedures. It is very easy for them to become sheltered workshops, a world apart and unto themselves. When that happens, they effectively cease to contribute to the RLS process. This realisation does not constitute a downgrading of the school's functions in conjunction with RLS. It merely stresses the fact that, with respect to languages, linkages are crucial for schools, regardless of whether another Stage (like Stage 6) is the crux-Stage or the school itself is the crux-Stage.

Literacy in Xish is frequently an important RLS goal. Yish advocates often play down the legitimacy or importance of Xish literacy, as part and parcel of denying Xish any serious intellectual claims as a whole. If schools are to help attain literacy in Xish there must be linkages between the school and an out-of-school literature, press, commercial institutions, organisational and governmental record keeping or other literacy-based occupations. On the whole, however, literacy in Xish will usually remain a weak competitor with literacy in Yish (most frequently acquired in the very same schools). It is Yish literacy that makes the greater contribution to social

mobility and the Central Education Authorities that ultimately control both Stage 4a and 4b schools, constantly make sure that the Yish education domain is particularly stressed, evaluated and rewarded. Thus, the school's role in Xish literacy training is inevitably a two-edged sword. It often reveals a somewhat naive and inevitably self-serving view when over-eagerly pushed by educators. Furthermore, oral Xish education can more easily be out-of-school linked and may explain why some Third World groups (e.g. many Hopi, ultra-Orthodox Yiddish speakers and Quechua) have never fully opted for school-based literacy to begin with and basically trust in Stage 5 education, because it is almost completely free from the control of Yish authorities and can, therefore, more often be viewed as a form of indigenous enculturation and socialisation. This is something no Stage 4 school can do for them with so few compromises.

Students frequently bolster the numbers of speakers, readers and writers of Xish, but their RLS 'ability' (like anyone else's ability) is far from being the same as 'performance' and it is performance in social functions which is the 'litmus-test' of RLS attainment. As one of my colleagues in this volume has rightly observed, the capacity of schools to produce competent bilinguals is far greater than the capacity of the bilingual community to reproduce itself! The size of the hiatus between these two criteria is inversely proportional to the success of RLS and of the school's contribution to that success. The entire difference among the three types of schools included in the GIDS scale (recognition of three types of schooling – admittedly the trichotomisation of a continuum – is hardly a sign of downgrading the phenomenon under consideration!) is trivial if these differences are not related to functional linkages. Nevertheless, schools may serve RLS in additional ways, beyond the pursuit of literacy and of oral competence alone. Schools can serve to ideologise the young on behalf of RLS. Secondary and Tertiary School students and young adults as a whole are the ones that most need to be moved (and to be moved most quickly) from school to Xish life out of school, either by moving from Stage 5 to 6 or from Stage 4 to 6. It is relatively easy to found (and even to fund) a school; it is much harder to graduate a cohort of fluent and active Xish speakers; and it is hardest of all for this cohort to continue being fluent and active speakers of Xish until they find an equally committed life-partner and start nuclear families of their own. It is at this step that intergenerational transmission is achieved and that the required social linkages to the Xish school attain their RLS goal.

RLS-related schools are not at all the same as ordinary FLES or other second language education. RLS related schools must be cognizant of the special methods and materials that are required for a language that has

only a limited out-of-school reality. These schools cannot afford to teach imaginary Xish conversations at airports, hotel check-ins, luxury-car sales-offices and other social mobility related and Yish dominated interactions. The programme of study that is required for RLS is an identity formation one, an Xian-via-Xish ideologising one, a community building one and a community membership one. The teachers, programmes and materials for such programmes are likely to be non-existent or in extremely short supply. Teachers may need to prepare their own materials for years – led by exemplary teacher trainers and curriculum/materials specialists – before there is a sufficient market for recognised publishers to enter into the preparation and sale of such items. However, the proximity of schools to homes and parents, the crucial links between schools and communities, on the one hand, and between schools and ideology on the other hand, constitute both the rewards and the challenges that RLS teachers can expect for their labours. If they work as hard on linkages to ‘out of school’ and ‘after school’ as they work on their ‘in school’ lesson plans, then they will really be an asset to RLS rather than a detour or a cul-de-sac.

The ‘high power’ stages

The further above Stage 6 (and particularly above Stage 4) the greater the contribution that GIDS stages make to fostering Xian social power and individual social mobility. As might be expected, these stages are particularly problematic for Xish, because of the Yish social control and superiority in resources that envelop them. An example of this can often be found even in the local work-sphere which is often ethnically mixed as a result of the demographic marginalisation of Xians even in their ‘own’ traditional region. Xish media are often very pale imitations of Yish media, both in quality and in quantity and the minor Xish media that do exist have never been evaluated from the point of view of their linkage realisation, particularly *vis-à-vis* Stage 6. The media can interfere with intergenerational Xish mother-tongue transmission more easily and more frequently than they can reinforce it, if only because there are ever so much more Yish media than Xish media. Higher education is another instance of the potential danger of higher stages for RLS. Not only is such education oriented toward life and success in the Yish world, but (unless radicalised for RLS purposes) it rarely links back to Xish mother tongue transmission and to the Stage 6 nexus in which such transmission transpires. Every Xish dollar devoted to Stage 1 consumes dollars that could have been devoted to Xish neighbourhood institutions and activities of all kinds. The media are less under Xian community control than are local nurseries, kindergartens, neighbourhood health services, scouting groups, sports clubs, choruses,

dramatic groups, job training services, libraries, homework assistance groups, test-review groups, hobby clubs, charitable outreach organisations, summer camps, etc., etc.⁵ The latter serve as the sinews of growing up Xian in an Xish-speaking community and can more evenly compete with their Yish counterparts, and at lesser expense when doing so, than can Xish media with Yian media (and international media under Yian auspices) *en toto*. Neighbourhood and community events and activities are real neighborhood life and they feed back to one's real family immediately. Media, at best, only creates a 'virtual' community and, taking a leaf from Australian experience along these lines, much more of a Yish than of an Xish one at that.⁶ Black English media programmes have not made Black English speakers out of 'White English' listeners, nor will they ever do so based on the few hours per week involved and the differential statuses of the two dialects. Indeed, if the truth be told, the comical and counterculture contexts in which Black English programmes are commonly situated may well 'turn off' more Black English speakers than they attract 'White English' speakers!

All or Nothing at all!

Rocking chair languages vs reaching too high and losing it all

There are three possible alternative strategies for RSL efforts. One is 'shoot for the moon!' Another is 'anything is better than nothing'. The third is 'the right step at the right time'. Tragically, the first approach mentioned above has attracted all too much attention, most of it of the lip-service variety. In reality, never being satisfied is much more of an RLS disease than being satisfied with minimal and purely symbolic accommodations by the Yish authorities. In the face of the truth that Yish is still the only truly indispensable language, one that every Xian must learn for certain vital functions, those who opt and counsel to 'shoot for the moon' actually advise that those who seek to defend a threatened language are obliged (or so some argue) to wage a total multi-front struggle. 'One cannot save the value of a competence unless one saves . . . the whole set of political and social conditions of production' of the producers/consumers (Bourdieu, 1991: 57). But surely this is a prophecy of doom disguised by whistling in the dark. Which Yish communities or even polities today can be said to control 'the whole set of political and social conditions of production'?

Similarly one-sided and misguided *vis-à-vis* the realities of RLS is the very similar view that real change can be attained only if full control of resources and means for decision making and the institutional domains where language socialisation occurs is in the hands of Xians. This merely

restates the problem of Xish in more academic terms and still leaves the threatened language-in-society without a plan of action. Distributive justice may strike some as highly desirable, but the barriers in the way of its direct attainment are so formidable that postponing RLS until they are overcome essentially means postponing meaningful RLS until it may be too late for its more than ornamental attainment. Views such as the above are also impoverishing, socially and morally, because they imply that RLS can succeed only to the extent that it replaces Yish monism by Xish monism. This spells the death knell for pluralism and peaceful coexistence. In most cases, the best that RLS can hope for, as a starting point for its never ending road into the future, is to disengage from dependence upon and supervision by the Yish authorities. The most meaningful way in which this can be done from the very outset is to stress the role of Xish in family, intimacy, and ethnocultural authenticity in local identity. Rendering kith and kin into important allies (even on a cross-border basis) is more important initially (and for a long time thereafter) than conquering outer space. Pointing out the perfidy that may hide behind the use of Xish by Yish authorities (a use that can be halted at will and that does not feed back to the intergenerational transmission nexus) is more immediately and effectively instrumental than being co-opted by such gambits.

While it is undoubtedly true that 'a [person's] reach must exceed his/her grasp', the theory of linkages between higher order and lower order stages is a more instrumental truth. It helps differentiate between RLS for the current generations (by focusing on 7, 6 and 5) and RLS for the next generation (by focusing on 4, 3 and 2). Neighbourhood and community focus already provides a series of targets for RLS that go beyond the home and family into pre-school, extra-curricular and a host of parent alone, child alone and parent-child interactions. Home-family-neighbourhood-community undoubtedly benefit from higher level linkages (especially if such linkages have been built-in *ab initio*), but the outreach vs the compartmentalisation impact of these linkages is under RLS guidance rather than under Yish control. That's a big difference. Does this make Xish into a rocking chair language? How many languages of atomic physics are there really today anyway (even in the Yish sphere)? Is 'anything short of everything' a capitulation to obsolescence? Hardly! The vast majority of languages in the age of globalisation will, at most, reach as high as being languages of popular science for the majority of their speakers, of up to secondary education and lower tertiary education for a much smaller majority and of local humanistic specialisation only for a small minority. Dutch is not insulted thereby, nor Danish, exposed as they already are to English as Basque and Catalan are to Spanish (and English too). 'Reason-

ableness in all things' is a far better maxim for the pursuit of RLS in a focused linkage pattern than is 'the sky's the limit'.

Focus and priorities are not equivalent, by any means, to obsolescence, folklorisation, self-limitation to 'rocking chair' status or oblivion in the rocket age. Focus and priorities merely build the recognition that, whether with or without political boundaries, most languages will not have significant participatory functions in global power attainment nor in direct competition for functional superiority with those few languages that do have such power attainment. Weakened and threatened languages must certainly pursue their security and their future elsewhere. They must not exhaust themselves and diminish themselves in an impossible as well as an impoverished view of what they signify in the lives of their own speech communities. Their 'members' will forever be bi- or trilingual, with each of their languages – even the most powerful among them – 'enacting' only special and complementary functions. If they play their cards intelligently, there will always be functional space for smaller languages and RLS-advocates must be in the forefront of those who know what to aim at and how to reinforce their primary goals through subsidiary ones.

When is 'too high', too high? Certainly when it neglects the basic crucial stages for intergenerational transmission. Certainly when it neglects the linkages between higher stages and the crux stages that are required if Xish is to break out of a pattern that is both downward and dependent on Yish approval, sufferance or support. Any RLS theory must realise that many languages (not all, as some claim) function across several stages simultaneously. Some even stage-jump, and develop a pattern that ignores a particular stage (e.g. Stage 5 or 4a). Stages are linear and human lives and societal functioning are not. Nevertheless, not all language-communities have the same problems, resources, goals or aspirations and, therefore, they cannot all have the same tactical strategies. Xish must cut out of Yish control and do so without entering into competition with Yish on the very turf that Yish controls. There are 'haves' and 'have nots' on the language scene as there are on all other scenes. But there are functions that Xish has and can defend that Yish does not have. And these are the logical functions around which to build the RLS fortresses and to which all efforts must link back. They must also be the points of departure from which to attain functional expansion, doing so from a few positions of relative strength rather than from many positions of relative weakness.

Of course, it is also possible for RLS to aim too low (to see the telephone and the personal computer as the same kind of intrusive danger as television and cinema). But, as this volume amply illustrates, 'they don't hardly make that kind no more'. Certainly, my own views do not counsel a retiring

and isolating self-enfeeblement. The highest power stage that one can safely and effectively productively regulate and make use of is the crux beyond which functional attempts must be made and back to which linkages must be secured. To do otherwise is simply to demonstrate that Xish is second best, rather than putting its best foot forward. The third mistaken RLS path is the 'anything is better than nothing' one. Fortunately, it has few principled defenders (although it does sometimes have exploitative practitioners) and is little more than aspirin for terminally diseased patients. RLS must be a plan of action and a plan must certainly have priorities rather than lack them.

Gains and losses during the final decade of the 20th century

A decade is usually very little time in which to either experience much change in RLS circumstances or to note much payoff from differential RLS efforts. However, the decade of the 90s *has* revealed a number of notable changes in this field. First of all, the field as such came into being, as an identifiable area of international interest, both among individual academics, organisational entities and, more and more often, among Yish authorities as well. Many of those who had laboured alone in this field for what must have seemed an eternity, have finally realised that they are not alone at all, that others share their concerns, realise the justice of their complaints and the significance of their goals, not only locally but at an international and pan-human level. This constitutes a tremendous change in general atmosphere and we must pause not only to acknowledge it, but to ponder why it occurred when it did and whether it will really make a difference in RLS (or merely amount to window-dressing disguising and hiding old wounds). Just as the ethnic revival of the 60s and 70s led to the unprecedented growth in multiculturalism advocates in the mainstream *per se* during the 80s and 90s, so the latter turn of events, in turn, has prompted calls for affirmative action and positive intervention on the language scene too. But will the sympathies of European Union affiliates, the advocacy of environmentalists sensitive to the linkage between terra-diversity and lingua-diversity, and the pious resolutions of well-meaning international bodies really make a difference either in the rates of intergenerational mother-tongue transmission or in the attainment of any other specific RLS goals (or will they merely become undertakings without any differences in outcome)?

Advanced technology and globalisation have redefined much of life. In the process of so doing they have impacted and changed such core relationships and experiences as family, neighbourhood and community. Yet each child is still born into a specific nuclear family and that family is situated in

a particular community, however altered both family and community have become over the past century. Xian families now need RLS education (how to be parents – and even how to be grandparents – in Xish. 'How to "do" RLS in your home' is a course that one can and should be enrolled in repeatedly in every RLS setting and that should be sponsored by every RLS movement and team-taught by the most experienced, inventive and dedicated advocates that are available. Among the things that need to be taught are the joys and responsibilities of immediate community. The benefits of RLS in counteracting anomie should not be minimised. *Gemeinschaft* can be alive and well – in the very midst of galloping *Gesellschaft* – for those who realise that what it has to offer (above and beyond the ideological claims to authenticity and fidelity, neither of which should be dismissed in the slightest) is a balm to the spirit and a new and special kinship with those to whom one 'belongs' in a very special way and with very special links that only Xish can activate and maintain. An RLSer's life is not an easy one, but the struggle for Xish is a struggle for meaning in life and, therefore, that struggle is, in great part, also its own reward, a reward 'beyond rubies'.

So, can threatened languages be saved? It is really too early to answer the above basic question on empirical grounds, but it may be indicative of what the future portends that none of our cases has reported any substantial progress attributable by local observers to general atmospheric circumstances such as international treaties and conventions. Although a positive atmosphere for RLS may be preferable to a negative one (actually, even that is by no means certain, since the motivational intensification attributable to moderate opposition must not be entirely written off), the direct and 'evaluatable' linkage between such general positiveness and specific RLS goals may be lacking or insufficient. Certain litigious climates (e.g., the Frisian and the Maori scenes) should be watched with particular care in order to fathom the likelihood and the circumstances required for legal measures, legislation, treaties, agreements, court orders and monetary compensatory awards to be able to make a practical difference in connection with specific RLS priorities and linkages. Should such actions prove to be effective in specific cases, they must still be differentiated from the contributions of more general conventions and agreements arrived at by international agencies and organisations that lack concrete power to enforce their resolutions. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, there is no reason to be overly optimistic in either case, because a lack of priorities and linkages seems to characterise the entire legalistic approach.

None of the dozen individual cases that were studied in the late 80s, and early 90s and that have been re-examined in this volume at the very close of one century and the beginning of the next, have experienced dramatic

successes during the decade separating one evaluation from the other. Although widespread attitudinal positiveness toward Xish and substantial self-reported language competence in Xish are given in many cases, the discrepancies between attitudes and performance are as noteworthy in conjunction with RLS as they are in conjunction with all areas of 'moral behavior' where 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak'. On the other hand, there are a few telling cases in which a palpable sense of exhaustion seems to hang heavily in the air. Somewhat more than a dozen years ago, at an international sociolinguistic conference held in the Basque Country, the local university students in the audience asked a representative of the Catalan Secretariat of Language Policy how Basque could best get to the initial 'take off' stage which Catalan had presumably already experienced a decade earlier. Today, the question might well be reversed, with Catalans asking the Basques where they get the energy 'to keep at it', in view of the post-nationalism that globalisation is fostering so widely. Catalan is still a success case by any reasonable criterion, but can RLS succeed in advancing and stabilising itself *vis-à-vis* Yish if only what is reasonable is pursued? The fatigue that is fostered by not being able to hold on (on a long-term basis) to reasonable success may be every bit as wearying as the fatigue that ultimately overcomes those who have never achieved any success at all.

The comfort that minority languages could take a decade ago from Australian language policy, in comparison to the policies regarding aboriginal languages there or immigrant languages in the USA, has largely vanished in the interim. Instead of Australia being the forerunner of a sea change in the valuation of aboriginal or immigrant languages on the part of English-dominant host-countries, the direction of influence has run in the opposite direction. The traditional American negativeness toward such languages (whether with or without an English Only stampede) has crossed the Pacific and invaded Australia. Immigrant languages, in particular, usually remain in the most unenviable position, but note the special circumstances, external in one case and internal in the other, that have made both Puerto Rican Spanish and ultra-Orthodox Yiddish into exceptions to that general rule.

Quebec has thus far twice not opted for independence (whether with or without association with Canada), and, were it to do so in the coming decade (it would only require a miniscule change in 'New Canadian' votes for this to happen), the impact on French RLS in its neighbouring provinces would almost certainly not be an immediately positive one. As for the remaining success case, Hebrew in Israel does show some movement (even if only in a cleverly ineffective way) toward regrets about the Zionist decimation of the other major Jewish languages there (particularly Yiddish,

Ladino/Judezmo, Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian). Such regrets have multiplied sufficiently during the past decade (see, e.g. Shohamy, 1999) to lead at least to a tokenistic establishment of entertainment oriented governmentally funded 'authorities' for the first two language mentioned above. If there was ever any doubt that RLS should not be held captive by Yish governments, Israel seems destined to become the perfect proof of that point. On the other hand, political independence seems to have become an uncertain RLS attraction or proven value, and not in Quebec alone (where the overwhelmingly francophone population may soon have needed three chances in which to think it over, if, indeed, it is only three). Puerto Rico seems to be inching toward a plebiscite on statehood vs either independence or continued Commonwealth status during the next decade (Ramirez, 2000). There seems to be even less interest than usual in independence there. Instead, there is a growing realisation that Spanish can be as much endangered in Puerto Rico with independence as without it, given that Spanish-English bilingualism is inevitable, whether on the mainland or on the island, due to continuing individual and societal dependence on the USA in both locations.

We are left then with an ambiguous scenario: the general climate of opinion *vis-à-vis* threatened languages has improved in an amorphous and largely still ineffectual sense, whereas actual RLS prospects and attainments have improved very little, if at all, during the past decade, and seem even to have deteriorated somewhat in some surprising cases. Is this a harbinger of the growing and long-heralded triumph of globalisation over ethnonationalism? Probably no such complete triumph is in the offing, because, as we have noted before, globalisation itself also prompts (and even requires) a greater recognition of local co-identity and authenticity. We are, therefore, left with a human struggle which defies the complete victory of either the old or the new. The complexity of human motives and identities is rarely better illustrated than via the RLS scene, where neither total triumph nor total resignation, neither total reason nor total irrationality are in the offing and where particularism and globalisation cohabit in a sometime antagonistic as well as in a sometime cooperative marriage. Human societies will just have to make room for both and, indeed, will have to do so increasingly, as migration and globalisation ('the free movement of populations and goods') both continue to advance during the next century. Because RLS may well become somewhat more rational and practical in focus-selection and in linkage-attainment efforts, many more threatened languages may, as a result, be better off with it than without it. Yet these languages may not cease to be threatened as a result. Yish languages too may come to realise that RLS tactics also have much to offer

them (as, e.g., in the Swedish case), rather than being totally devices of Xish languages alone.

So can threatened languages be saved? This question now has an informed though uncertain answer: Yes, more of them can be saved than has been the case in the past, but only by following careful strategies that focus on priorities and on strong linkages to them, and only if the true complexity of local human identity, linguistic competence and global interdependence are fully recognised. More languages are threatened than we think, and they are not necessarily only the smaller, more disadvantaged ones either. The languages of the world will either all help one another survive or they will succumb separately to the global dangers that must assuredly await us all (English included) in the century ahead.

Notes

1. The notational convention of designating the *threatened* language as X or Xish and its speakers as Xians (not as Xmen, as before, since it has been pointed out that the latter designation is not always regarded as gender neutral [even though 'German' may be so regarded]), while its *threatening* and stronger co-territorial competitor is referred to as Y or Yish, will be continued here. This convention too has been criticised, purportedly for reducing languages and human population to mere lifeless and morally equivalent symbols. Nevertheless, since the entire message and intent of RLS is to champion and foster the unique role of languages in their own traditionally related populations and functions, the handiness of the shorthand designations, coupled with the transparency of the contexts in which they are employed, seems to me to outweigh the objections to them.
2. It is here, at the level of communication with 'real speakers', that 'school language' can actually weaken RLS by fostering a variety which differs from that of the 'last Mohican' speakers. 'School language' differs from home and street language everywhere in the world, and it is a problem everywhere for children from communities in which school-discrepant speech dominates and literacy is slight. But for threatened languages there is a danger that the school variety will further weaken the vernacular and even eventually replace it, undercutting any claim for authenticity that Xish may have sought to stake out, and fostering instead a variety which is both overly puristic and stilted lexically, on the one hand, and rife with the usual learners' errors and foreign markedness, on the other.
3. The entire attempt to ideologically clarify the Xian-via-Xish authenticity Weltanschauung – an attempt that must precede rather than come as an afterthought to the establishment of schools for RLS purposes – is rendered null and void when Xish becomes merely a subject (much like algebra) with no genuine societal roles or statuses to enact. The 'de-ethnicised ethnic school' is a phenomenon which results from the routinisation of Xish and its detachment from parental or communal reality.
4. Indeed, the school dedicated to Xish may have to become an active builder of after-school and out-of-school Xian society, in order that the school itself can then

- make sense and make a difference in the lives of the generations that are associated with it. Such a school may well have to have a longer school day, a longer school week and a longer school year in order to involve parents, teachers and students in the joint and constant task of creating and fostering the community through which intergenerational mother tongue transmission takes place and is nourished. Obviously, the child-centred, permissive and progressive school, whatever its virtues, is not in tune with RLS needs and purposes.
5. The mass-media 'fetish' of some minority language activists appears in its true unrealistic light when one but pauses to consider how few books and records get produced per annum (notwithstanding their much lower cost) in most Xish settings. If small-scale, thin market literacies require a topical or genre niche in order to hold their own in a Yish world, this is all the more so in connection with self-produced radio or TV, where Yish programmes are super-abundant. I do make an obvious exception for *self-regulated communication technologies* such as computers, e-mail and web sites which enable Xian youngsters, parents, teachers and activists of all kinds to network, stay in touch with one another, exchange pro-Xish materials and programmes, engage in desk-top publishing and arrange regular *actual* community functions. Indeed, these self-regulated communication technologies are content neutral. They are facilitators of any stage and can, therefore, constitute part of regular Stage 6 or Stage 4 functioning, just as does the telephone and the fax machine. They do not, however, constitute substitutes for the natural intergenerational mother tongue transmission process and, therefore, must be linked to it by RLSers themselves.
 6. There might be some promise in adding a 'language key' to TV programmes in largely Xian regions, much like the violence, sex, vulgarity keys that are already commonly available to parents who want to block certain types of programmes from their children's viewing. If a 'Yish key' is either practically or ethically contra-indicated, then it may be preferable to set certain days or hours for TV viewing by younger children. Sooner or later, however, they must be helped to face the pervasiveness of Yish and its functional role in their individual and societal role repertoire. This is a far more constructive educational goal for home and school, than to patronise tokenistic Xish programmes, produced by and for Yish authorities, that merely use a number of Xish lexical items in ways that prepare for Yish life, rather than fostering RLS at the home, family, neighbourhood and community levels.

References

- Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (translation of *Ce que parler veut dire*. 1982. Paris: Fayard).
- Edwards, J. (1994) Ethnolinguistic pluralism and its discontents: A Canadian study and some general observations. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 110, 5–82. (Also note a dozen comments by other specialists, immediately after the 'focus' article).
- Fishman, J.A. (1997) *In Praise of the Beloved Language: A Comparative View of Positive Ethnolinguistic Consciousness*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Fishman, J.A. (ed.) (1999) *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grin, F. (1977) *Amanegement linguistique; de bon usage des concepts d'offre et de*

- demande. In Norman Labie (ed.) *Etudes recentes en linguistique de contact*. Bonn: Bimmler, 117–34.
- Grin, F. (1999) Market forces, language spread and linguistic diversity. In Kontra, Miklos, Robert Phillipson, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Tibor Varady (eds) *Language: A Right and a Resource: Approaches to Linguistic Human Rights* (pp. 169–86). Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Jernudd, B. (1998) Proposal for an action plan to benefit the Swedish language (translation of the summary of the original document published in the Swedish Language Committee's Newsletter Sprakvard, 2, 1998). *New Language Planning Newsletter* 13(1), 4–5.
- Haugen, E.I. (1953) *The Norwegian Language in America*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (Reprinted in one volume. 1969. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.)
- Myhill, J. (1999) Identity, territoriality and minority language survival. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 20(1), 34–50.
- Ozalins, U. (1999) Between Russian and European hegemony: Current language policy in the Baltic States. *Current Issues in Language and Society* 6(1), 6–47.
- Prilleltensky, I. (1994) *The Morals and Politics of Psychology*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ramirez, C. (ed.) (2000) Spanish and English in Puerto Rico: Past, present and future. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 145 (entire issue).
- Shohamy, E. (1999) Language and identity of Jews in Israel and in the diaspora. In D. Zisenwine and D. Shers (eds) *Present and Future: Jewish Culture, Identity and Language* (pp. 79–99). Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University (School of Education).